

cinema Canada

Canada's International Festivals

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Cover A surprisingly modern Nell Shipman plays with a bear cub in the days of the silent movies. Her career went on to span 50 years (see p. 35).

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Special Issue

Two sections, "Canada's International Festivals" and "Women and Film," take up a major part of this issue of Cinema Canada. Although the festivals happened this summer, it took time to get them into perspective and they seemed important enough to devote space to, even at this late date. As for "Women and Film," the section does not pretend to be exhaustive: simply a first concentrated look at a subject we'll come back to regularly.

In the next issue, Cinema Canada will include its regular "Introducing..." section and "Film Reviews." In addition, there will be a major article on the end of the Toronto Co-op, written by Patrick Lee and R. Bruce Elder, an analysis of Two Solitudes by Doug Isaac, a profile of Richard Gabourie by Krystyna Hunt and a review of his film, Three Card Monte by J. Paul Costabile.

Until early January, then, Cinema Canada extends best holiday wishes to its readers. Cheers.

REVERB

Nielson Clarifies

First of all I would like to thank Cinema Canada and Paul Kelman for his thorough and generally upbeat article on the activities of Nielsen-Ferns. There are, however, one or two points I feel that I need to clarify.

Mr. Kelman quotes me as saying, "if the CBC or the government can insist that the independents get 50-75 percent of what the CBC actually spends...." I was not suggesting that the independents should get 50-75 percent of what it actually spends on a given program or series. In other words, if say, Superspecials presently spend \$200,000 for an in-house production, then I think we should get \$100,000-\$150,000 from CBC for a comparable production rather than the \$20,000-\$50,000 we now receive.

The article also quotes me as saying that all the money pumped into NFB and CBC has not produced any programs "the world recognizes as fine." I think this statement should have been broken down into two parts. Quite obviously the NFB has been the world leader and recognized as such in the style of documentary and animation it has specialized in. What I think is true is that in television, Canada has produced nothing that the world has recognized as fine to the extent of wanting to buy it.

My last point is that I feel any history of Nielsen-Ferns should emphasize the importance of *The Newcomers* and the contribution of Imperial Oil to the existence and success of that series. If the CBC and other government agencies are now taking inde-

pendent producers more seriously, then it is because Imperial Oil had the daring and faith to give us a chance to prove ourselves. I think this is implicit in Mr. Kelman's article but I feel the need to make it explicit in a country where heavily endowed public agencies have been unwilling to take such risks with private producers. I think Imperial Oil's initiative deserves far more recognition than it has received.

Richard Nielsen

President

Nielsen-Ferns International Ltd.

Update on Agi

Among the (all too numerous) subscriptions queries, we received the following from Agi Ibranyi-Kiss, past editor of Cinema Canada. (We double checked and her sub is in order - it's the post office again trying to muck things up.) We thought readers would like to hear from Agi too. She is currently coordinating the Symposium of the Coevolution of Science and Spirit which takes place at the Statler Hilton in New York Nov. 17-20.

This is what I'm doing now - amazing, isn't it? So from sprocket-holes I've moved to test-tubes and quantum physics and neurology - but it really is great fun! Of all things to be the Media Coordinator of - a Science Symposium at the Hilton Hotel! I have a very strong suspicion that my file is being moved from department to department as the Great Script Writer tries to make up His mind whether it will be a documentary or a tragedy or

a comedy or a kiddie show, but at any rate, it's still my life, or at least remnants of it, and I still love the roles being offered.

Haven't received a Cinema Canada in a while, wondering... But at any rate - here's my propaganda, where's yours?

In case some of the Old Guard Readership is wondering whatever happened to, you might let them know that I'm alive and well and still avoiding the Perils of Classification. May all beings be free from specialization, may all beings keep chasing their ever-growing dreams towards eternal horizons.

Love and Blessings,

Iman (a.k.a. Agi)

Iman Ibranyi-Kiss

Media Coordinator

New Dimensions of Consciousness

P.S. CBC is sending Myra Cree and two crew to film this! O! Canada!

Men's Lib

Att. Jane Dick

Re: Mary Stephen's *Ombres de Soie* review Aug. '78 issue.

"Having her husband John Cressey on camera is a definite asset..."

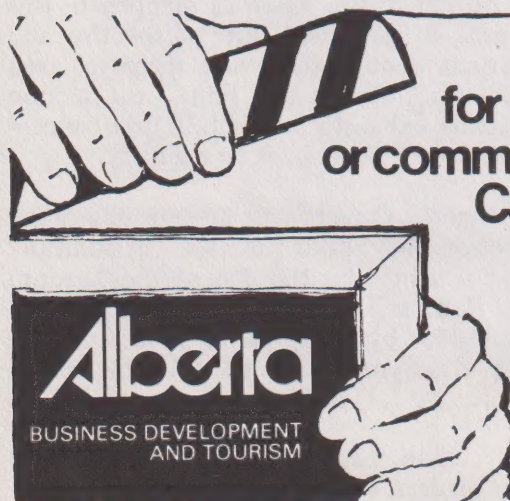
I am no one's "husband!"

Yours Truly,

John Cressey

Fresco Fiasco

*We extend our apologies to filmmaker Maurice Bulbulian and to René Balcer for the error which appeared in Balcer's article "A Camera and A Purpose: Maurice Bulbulian" in issue no. 48 of Cinema Canada. The word "fiasco" was printed in place of the word "fresco" in the following phrase describing Bulbulian's *La Richesse Des Autres*: "Aside from being a textbook illustration of the evolution of a political issue from personal problem to shared concern to political platform, it is an imposing fresco of mining and of a miner's life, encompassing occupational diseases, family tensions, deterioration of physical and mental health, strikes, lockouts, and the creation of ghost towns." We are sorry for any embarrassment caused. Ed.*



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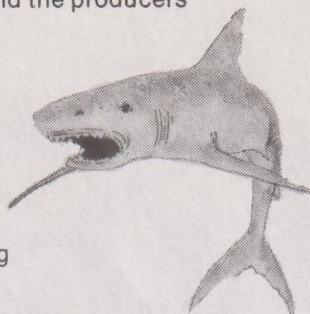
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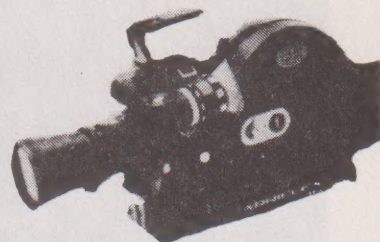
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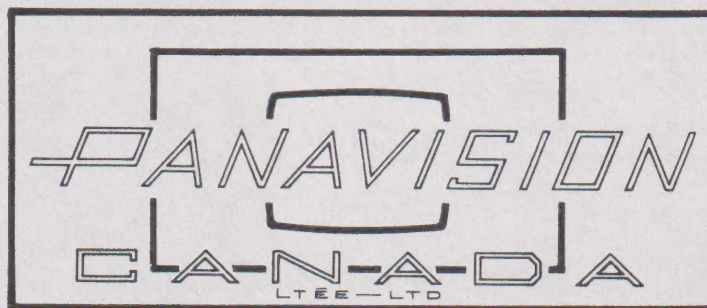
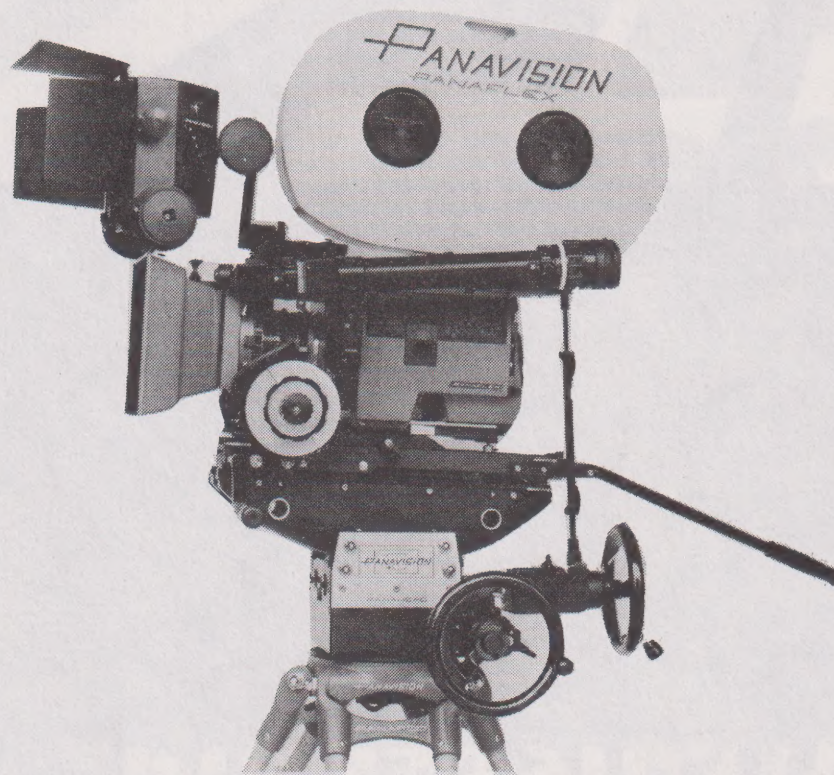
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a hot time in the old town

by Lois Siegel

Montreal was ablaze with the news of the big fire in the East End. And roving reporter Lois Siegel was at the scene, camera at the ready...

photos by Lois Siegel



Everyone's rushing; the end is in sight

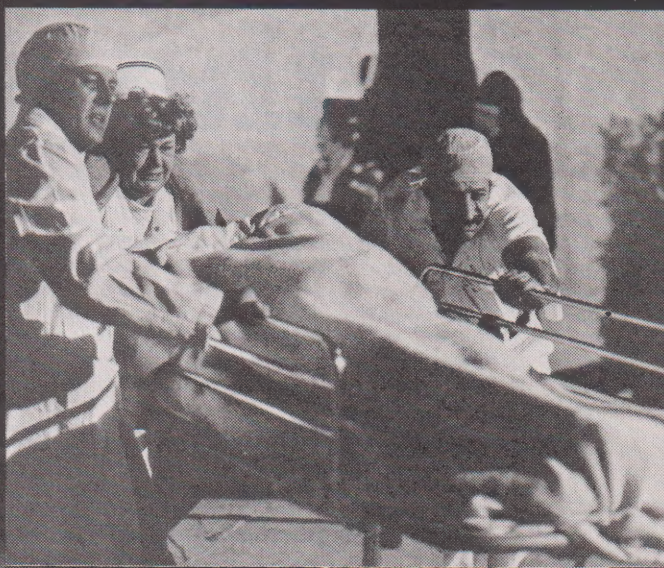


photo: Lois Siegel

photo: Attila Dory

The firemen work overtime as Shelly Winters hustles off the smoldering victims and stuntwoman Céline Fournier doubles as a human torch

If you like flaming buildings, hysteria, wet people, terror and confusion, then you will probably love **City on Fire**, an Astral-Bellevue Pathé/Sandy Howard Production.

Montreal's latest — and perhaps only 'disaster' film, as opposed to film disaster — has just finished shooting approximately 180,000 feet.

The \$5,300,000 picture starred Shelley Winters, Susan Clark, Henry Fonda, Barry Newman, Ava Gardner and Leslie Nielsen. It tells the story of a city that catches on fire.

One of the most interesting aspects of the film is Prince Street, a street specifically constructed for the film. It cost \$400,000 to build. Located at Lafarge Canada Cement, Old

Plant No. 1 in Montreal East, the street required: 10,000 square feet of asbestos, 10,000 feet of wiring, 200 gallons of paint, 500 gallons of fireproofing. It was 500 feet in length and construction took 9 weeks, 7 days a week, 10 hours a day — 31,500 man-hours.

Some buildings were as high as 60 feet. Because the set had to last throughout the shoot, three coats of sodium silicate were applied to the buildings to prevent the framework from burning as flames poured from the windows.

Jeff Melamed was hired as a summer student to draft drawings from photographs for the construction. Then William McCraw came in as Production Designer. Romeo Turcotte, a Québécois film veteran, was in charge of the actual building.

The street included authentic-looking run-down houses, a restaurant, grocery, cinema, offices, a modern hospital, and even a dirty bookstore and topless bar.

Lois Siegel writes, photographs, teaches and makes experimental films in Montreal.



An empty street, ready for disaster

Diesel fuel was ejected from pipes and lit for the fire effect. Flames shot out of the windows. Asbestos boxes were built behind the window to contain the flames. Asbestos also coated the walls to prevent them from catching fire.

The action on Prince Street comprises the last 20 minutes of the film. On the street most of the shooting took place at night. Approximately 32 real off-duty firemen from Montreal East were hired to keep the fire under control and to act as extras in the film. **City on Fire** had to look elsewhere. They discovered a big fire truck building company right in Quebec – Thibault in Pierreville, which ships truck bodies to the United States. (Ford Motor Company supplies the engines.)

During the shooting, the set was set ablaze. Extra lights illuminated the area where the action was to take place. Three cameras rolled and the scene began in the middle of black clouds of smoke and darting flames. When the director, Alvin Rakoff, yelled "Cut," the lights went out and the firemen rushed in to smother the fire. As the flames succumbed, the firemen, actors, extras, crew people and onlookers were left in total darkness – and one experienced what it might actually feel like to witness a real disaster.

Being an extra for a disaster film is not always as glamorous as one might think. In one scene, the bandaged extras were pushed from the hospital site down the burning, wet street on hospital beds. There was one small catch though. As they passed through the hospital doors, they were soaked down with water from a thoughtful city mayor, supposedly to keep them from catching on fire like the burning city.

One problem was that it became quite cold a few of those September nights, and freezing, sparsely clothed extras were soaked down and hauled off past the burning buildings among smoke and burning debris which became dangerous falling debris when the wind was up.

If you didn't mind a mild case of pneumonia and some slightly singed clothes (some extras were told to wear their Sunday best) – you would have loved the job.

To supplement what was filmed on Prince Street, researchers hunted down stock shots of actual fires to be edited with the real fire footage. Apparently a New York City Fire Department has a special film team which records every fire. It became a major source for material.

Special effects were created by Cliff Wenger and his family, who also worked on the film **Hooper**. Grant Page, from Australia, directed the stunts. Page is best known for his "total burn." He sets himself completely on fire without a face mask. Page merely uses a special gel on his face to prevent damage. Sounds like a pleasant leisure-time activity for someone who is looking for a little excitement in his life.

One interesting incident occurred when Page was doubling for an actor. After being set on fire, he ran across a street and was hit by a car driving 30 m.p.h. As he rolled on the car he smashed the windshield and put a dent in the roof. The only minor problem was that the car was brand new and scheduled to appear in a commercial the next morning at 9 a.m. The moral of this story is never loan your car to a film company, especially a film company making a disaster film, if you need it for a commercial the next morning. □

CinéMag

CinéMag is one year old. It was published for the first time last November, an offshoot of Cinema Canada, the monthly magazine.

In the beginning, it was called Trade News North. The tabloid format allowed swift publication of the latest news, and its physical divorce from the magazine got it through the mails quickly.

From the beginning, the publication has been independent, written by people who have no other stake in the film industry than to report on it well.

CinéMag has imposed itself, by monthly publication, by a strong presence at the Cannes Festival, by daily publication during the ten days of the Montreal Festival, as Canada's finest, best informed trade paper.

We take this opportunity to thank those who have supported us, both morally —by sharing your news with us— and financially —through your advertising dollars and your subscriptions.

We undertake our second year with renewed vigor. There are still many battles to be fought and won, not the least of which is inflation.

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some opening remarks

Impressions of the Montreal and Toronto festivals follow, in articles written by Ron Blumer and George Csaba Koller. But first, Connie Tadros tries to create a context for those impressions. How were they alike? How were they different? And what does it all mean for the future?

by Connie Tadros

As far as Montreal and Toronto are concerned, the competition is over. Montreal's World Film Festival and Toronto's Festival of Festivals were so different this year that it is now a question of choosing between two different festival formulas or deciding that Canada needs both. They were competitive with each other on only slight grounds: the selection of a few films. On the other major points — the kind of film selected, the sort of guests invited, the handling of the press and the press conferences, the appeal to the public and the handling of the screenings, the market and its potential — the festivals were as different as night and day.

It is tempting to push the analysis further and to suggest that the differences between the Montreal and Toronto festivals reflect the differences between French and English Canada. Certainly, the Montreal festival could not happen in Toronto, and the Toronto festival would not succeed in Montreal. So, in festivals, like in so much else, Canada has two valid options, two different approaches to a same problem: how to throw a film festival of international stature in Canada.

•

The Toronto festival was aimed at the Toronto public. When its organizer Bill Marshall commented, as was reported

in the press, that he hoped it would become a tourist attraction like the zoo, he expressed things well. If the Festival of Festivals can draw the public like flies, as it did this year, create local publicity like we have seldom seen, and present movies which please, the accomplishment is already enormous.

One result is that such a festival can become self-supporting. Another is that an important number of people will be exposed to films which they would not see otherwise. Never mind that some of the films may have been available through film societies or in specialized houses, the Festival drew the public. And the films were seen.

The Festival of Festivals knew how to sell its product. And the Ontario Censor Board gave it just the send-off every festival organizer dreams of by cutting the first film. The overflow audience for *In Praise of Older Women*, and the news which resulted from the near-riot scene, made participating in the festival a social must for many.

The films themselves were selected as the 'best' from other festivals, hence the name Festival of Festivals. Few risks were taken in the programming; the films had already had public exposure, and the organizers knew that they would go over well. There was no doubt about the public reaction to films like *Midnight Express* or *Girlfriends*. Their reputation preceded them.

In Montreal, the thrust of the festival was quite different. Director Serge Losique aimed big: the international film community. This meant moving directors, producers, stars and buyers across the Atlantic. He paid little attention to the local populace.

The ways to get people to move are several. Cannes does it by presenting films which have not been seen outside of the country in which they were produced. Losique adopted the formula.

Inviting some thirty films to compete for prizes, none of which had been exposed to international audiences, is a gamble. Nothing insures that the Montreal public will appreciate the latest production of Italian television, or a recent film from Argentina. But buyers — and the international film press — welcome seeing 'new product.'

One can also get people to move by simply inviting them: offering to pick up part of the tab. Milan (MIFED) had functioned for over fifteen years, and no one came. The time came to close down the film market or to make it work, and the Italians gambled on inviting everyone and paying for everything. Predictably, 'everybody' came. Three years later, when MIFED was established and the buyers and sellers could not do without it, MIFED cut down on its financial largesse and the market continued to thrive.

A market can only work if buyers and sellers come. Although this year Montreal enticed the sellers who, in turn, brought their films, the buyers were in shorter supply; but more on this later.

So, on the one hand, Toronto addressed itself to the public with many sure-fire films and impressive local press coverage, while Montreal catered to hundreds of foreigners — merchants, stars and directors, and the foreign press.

The local coverage in Montreal was good, and the existence of a 16 page, daily paper enhanced the festival. But it was curious to hear the anchor lady of a local program ask, during the final days of the festival, "Can the public go?" To her, the festival meant having Alain Delon talk to Dino Risi while stars from Spain, Germany, France and Italy stood by.

•

Socially, the festivals reflected their chosen styles.

In Toronto, the discothèque at the Plaza II, and the hospitality suite for those in the know, were home base. The reception given, for instance, by John Turner's C.F.I. Investments was minimal, and the shin-dig for opening night at the city hall (where one waited for 30 minutes to buy a ticket and another 30 minutes to receive the beer the ticket bought) was, in the words of one Ottawa civil servant, "tacky."

In Montreal, the receptions were sumptuous. Iran, which didn't have a film in the festival, but which had many domestic problems, threw a feast at its Expo pavillion, and the French out-did themselves at a sit-down lunch high in the Chateau Champlain. In context, the Italians, whose reception would rate high above CFI Investments cocktail in absolute terms, didn't come off so well in Montreal.

The standards were different.

The press, who personally had many complaints at both festivals, were better served in Montreal. Press conferences — two, three and four per day — were held, sometimes in front of television cameras and always with proper microphones.

Journalists met the directors, stars and producers after press screenings, and a steady flow of information other than gossip was generated. It had to be so because the foreign press was invited, and there were many in Montreal who filed stories abroad. In Montreal, it was easy to operate in many languages, and the Europeans appreciated it. For the World Film Festival, one article in the Paris *Figaro* was worth two in the *Toronto Star*.

Neither festival has given a detailed accounting of the success of the film markets, but a first distinction is evident. Toronto's physical surroundings were unacceptable, and few foreign merchants could have been expected to do business there.

In Montreal, the physical set-up was fine, as was the administration. What was missing were the American buyers. People had come from most of the European countries to sell to the Americans. For them, Montreal represents a French speaking back door, open to the States. They don't understand that it can be as hard for Canadians to move Americans north as it is for Europeans to move them east.

The Americans who did come to Montreal, came to promote their films, not sell them: just as the Americans who came to Toronto came to promote their films. Steve McQueen's **Enemy of the People** and Ted Kotcheff's **Great Chefs** were not being presented in Montreal and Toronto respectively to sell them; they were being shown so that the Canadian audiences would consequently go to see them.

If Canada's festivals are to be used by Americans to promote their own films rather than to buy new product, then the chances are that Toronto will fare better. It got the people to the theatres.

If, on the other hand, a festival is going to serve as a market place to sell Canadian films and to offer others the chance to buy and sell, then Montreal probably has the upper hand.

At the end, money makes the difference. Establishing an international film market is an enormous bluff for the first few years, and someone has to spend an enormous amount of money inviting guests to make it work. An atmosphere has to be created. Whether the public goes to a market is neither here nor there. MIFED refuses to allow the press in, let alone the public. And business in Cannes is not conducted around the official competition or even in the public places. Private discussions, receptions, and 'who you know' predominate.

So the principal questions are not the ones which are asked in the press as to whether Marshall or Losique is the villain of the festival drama Canadians play out in late summer.

The question is whether Canada can support two very different kinds of festivals — one aimed at the local population, the other at the international community — or not. If not, can either festival incorporate the virtues of the other? And, if not which will the governmental money-men back?

For the answer, same time, same station, next year... □

P.S. In all honesty, it must be said that the festivals share two more characteristics. Neither can manage to throw a decent opening night ceremony. And neither, at this writing, have settled all their debts.

festivals (2)

footsteps in the city

What is it like to get swallowed up by a city? To attend ten days of film festival and to feel you still have found no focus? Ron Blumer tells it like it was, for him.

by Ron Blumer



The heart of the Complex Desjardins where music helped to draw attention to the festival

How does one assess the success of something as vast as a ten day film festival. Were the films good? Did the buyers buy and the distributors sell? Did Dino Risi meet Brian De Palma over a drink at the Meridien and conclude a multi-million lira deal? Did Sergei Bondarchuk get his wife a new pair of nylon stockings?

Talking to the red-eyed festival groupies at week's end and comparing notes, one feels like a fisherman; the best ones inevitably got away. And the festival as a whole was like the crowd scene of a low budget movie, a bit short of extras. At \$5.00 for the evening shows with no discounts, the price per film was inaccessible high for the masses and the festival certainly was not a sellout.

The dearth of people was somewhat exaggerated by a lack of focus in the physical organization of the festival. The films were shown at a large impersonal multiscreen cinema, and the events and headquarters were two blocks down the street in a hotel and huge shopping complex. In a sense, the festival was swallowed up by the city and one got the impression that there was no one place, no bar or restaurant one could go to, and be sure of seeing festival participants. One's life that week was an endless scurrying up and down St. Catherine Street bumping, as it were, into strangers in the night.

The World Film Festival of Montreal is a wonderful thing and long may it live, but if it is to stay healthy, its organizers at the Conservatoire d'Art Cinématographique had better wake up to a few hard cold facts. One of the first things that leaps to mind is the fact that Montreal is not Cannes. This would be belabouring the obvious if the entire super structure of the festival were not so painfully apeing every last detail of that great mother earth festival of the Riviera. We start with the very poster which seems an almost exact copy of the kitchy, plastic Botticelli school of art favored by the Cannesians. Also the way in which the films are presented is a steal: the "Compétition officielle," and the special sections "Hors-concours," on the one hand, various national cinemas and for those films that don't fit anywhere else, the homages, and the Marché on the other.

The film market which is like ten film festivals in itself.

The Marché is a presentation by the producers themselves, hermetically sealed from the rarefied structure of the rest of the official festival with no place in the glossy brochures, often little publicity for the films, little forewarning of what is coming up, and last, but not least, no audiences for the excellent films presented. The idea, and the reality at Cannes, is that the festival provides screening opportunities for producers to present their films to the assembled multitude of critics, distributors and buyers. In this way, they gain publicity and sales. At Cannes, this critical mass is present and the Marché screening rooms are sometimes jammed. At Montreal, the few buyers and critics present were just too bleary eyed to attend the films presented in this catch-all category. The general paying public were excluded from these morning and afternoon screenings and the huge theatres at Cinéma Le Parisien were frequently completely empty.

Montreal is in an excellent position to mount a successful festival. Because of the language, it is an ideal halfway house for European producers to meet American distributors and

Montreal filmmaker Ronald Blumer is currently working as a Research Assistant for Donald Brittain and Robert Duncan at the National Film Board. He has just completed two short films on ageing.



Jurors Carole Laure and Alain Délon are joined by Robert Stack and wife as a satisfied Régine takes it all in at her disco

visa-versa. But it must be recognized that we do not and cannot have the tradition and general impact that Cannes has. With this in mind, the proliferation of categories without audiences seems a silly affectation. Even the competitive stance of the festival seems a little strained. Does anyone, after all, really care who has won the Montreal World Film Festival? For critics, distributors and the public alike, a festival is simply a place to see films, old films, new films and those precious films from all those countries that do not generally have access to the American market.

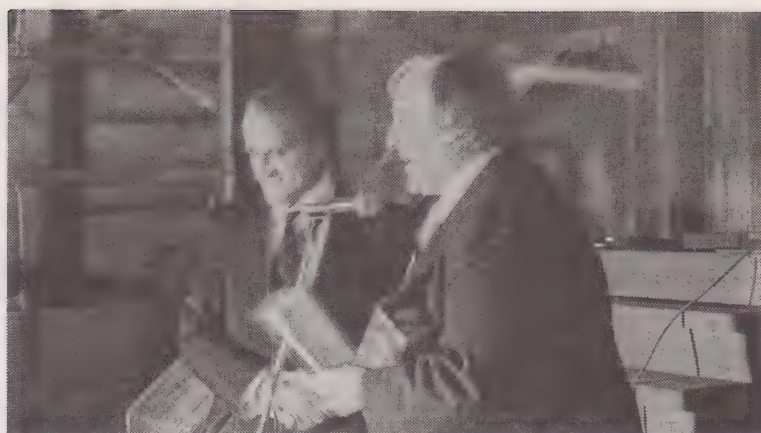
Carping aside, the essence of a film festival is, of course, the film, and for the critics who could keep their eyes open, there were films by the carload. At any one time from nine in the morning to eleven at night there were up to five movies showing simultaneously. Simply in terms of the mountains of 35mm film cans sitting in the lobby of the theatre waiting for shipment, the festival was an impressive spectacle.

Given the quantity of films, the tendency was to do a lot of film shopping, popping in and out from theatre to theatre, in mortal fear than one might be missing something better. These are hardly ideal viewing conditions for the savouring of some of the slower films that drone out of the near and far east. The pressure, however, is there, and one just cannot afford to miss films that are very unlikely to ever grace Canadian screens again.

What follows is a very iconoclastic selection of seven of my favorite films out of the large number so sampled. Canada, particularly in the guise of CBC drama put on an impressive showing. Acting and technical standards were so high that one is led to believe that we have acquired a feature film industry through the back door of television. **Tyler** by Ralph Thomas won the award as best Canadian film out of competition, and it was characterized not only by strong acting and a convincing plot, but was also blessed with a story which had some fiber to it. You had the impression that you were watching a film which was about something real in both human and social terms. **Drying Up the Streets** by Robin Spry, was also made for the CBC and was equally impressive in terms of story and acting. The film follows a reformed drug addict searching for his 18 year old daughter on Toronto's Yonge Street sin strip. In terms of Spry's own political evolution, the film is not without its ironic overtones. In the late sixties, Spry was making films about the then fashionable drug consumers in films like **Prologue** and **Flowers on a One Way Street**. The hippies have grown up and are now the bad guys corrupting today's youth into drugs and prostitution. Surprisingly, the for-



A jovial German press conference for **Flammende Herzen** (actors Peter Kern and Barbara Valentin, directors/producers Walter Bockmayer and Rolf Buhrmann)



A modest Serge Losique accepts gifts and praise from the president of the block committee Harold Greenberg

merly wicked police have now been romanticized into the good guys whose only aim in life is to protect our children. Either Robin Spry is showing us his true conservative colors or more likely, he picks his film subjects according to which way the wind is blowing.

Some of the films which I found particularly interesting came from small countries whose product is rarely seen in Canada. A film called **Insiang** was a first feature from the Philippines and had a freshness and directness of appeal missing from what we mistakenly think of as more sophisticated films. *Insiang* is the name of a young girl living in the congested urban slums with her corrupt mother and trying to maintain a bit of human dignity. The characters seem so real as to have been wrenched off the streets and the settings and situations give us a rare view of the way in which much of the world actually lives.

Chuquiago is a film which was shot in secret in Bolivia to be distributed God knows where. It is a minor masterpiece consisting of four vignettes of people from various classes in society showing how they deal with the political realities of Bolivia today. The film was unusual; it provided no easy leftist or rightist answers to the question of how politics affects people. We see, for example, a party member drunkenly lord-ing his petty power over his associates in a tavern. There is a portrait of a rich upper class girl torn between her family and her revolutionary boyfriend. Through the device of the four films, so quick to sacrifice depth for strident message.

Meanwhile back in shallow old Europe there were two films which were enjoyable and immensely popular with the festival audiences. The two were the black comedy **La belle emmerdeuse** from France and the blacker comedy **Un Borghese Piccolo Piccolo** from Italy. The first film (interesting in that it was written and directed by its stars Elizabeth Huppert and Roger Coggio), tells the story of a beautiful young woman peacefully engaged in the business of trying to slit her wrist. Pauline has everything in life, a good job, lots of lovers, a promising future, but she has just turned thirty and has decided that life is boringly not worth it. She sets about, elegantly staging her own death. (What *do* you wear to your own funeral, my dear?) The comedy comes from the fact that everything goes wrong from the plumbing in the fatal bathtub, to a chubby ball of Italian uselessness, Roger Coggio, who has latched onto her and is determined to woo her with his wonderful spaghetti. The climax of the film has everything in the plot crashing together in a scene worthy of the Marx Brothers.

The Italian petty petty bourgeois film is funny in a much subtler way. It tells the touching story of a government functionary grooming his slob of a son for a ministerial sinecure. The film takes a surprise plot turn in the middle and our quiet chuckling during the low key first half of the film turns to quiet groaning in the bloody and macabre second half. It is not a perfect film, but it is one which puts the audience through changes and certainly ensnares us in its emotional nets.

The final film which managed to make some impression on my festively bloodshot brain was again a Canadian film, **Blood and Guts**. As its title suggests, the film is about wrestling, and it is a formula which works. The director, Paul Lynch, was a bit like a magician who has shown us how he has hidden the rabbit in the hat and yet still wows us when he does the tricks. The convention in wrestling is to have a good guy and a bad guy in the ring. The bad guy accompanied by the boos of the crowd always wins the first part of the fight whereupon the battered hero rises phoenix-like from the mat to pummel the villain into the ground. This, it transpires, is exactly the plot of the movie, with the final victory taking place in the wrestling ring. What may have been a corny film, however, is saved by the realism of the settings and the realism of the situations in which the seedy company of wrestlers went their way through rural Ontario in their struggle to survive.

No review of the World Film Festival of Montreal would be complete without a description of the main social event of the week, if not the social event of the year. I am referring, of course, to the Fellini like gathering assembled by Harold Greenberg and company on the set of **City on Fire**, a film being shot in the East end of Montreal. The invitations to press and dignitaries called it a "block party" — rather amusingly since the block in question was a replica of the main street of a small mid-western town, built specially for the film. The store fronts and mailboxes and telephone poles were all destined to be burned to a crisp later in the month by the Wenger family, a special effects team from Los Angeles.

Gorging themselves on the hors-d'oeuvres and hot dogs were the stars of this "blockbuster," Shelly Winters, Barry Newman and Susan Clark. The most delightful moment came when everyone was hushed to silence and Greenberg announced that it was his son's twenty-first birthday. After the cast of thousands reluctantly sang Happy Birthday, the Wengers blew up a couple of cars to the cheers of the assembled multitude. Top that Régine. □

everybody came

Big and brash and slightly out of control. That was the Toronto festival this year, awash in its huge popular success. George Csaba Koller gives us a glimpse of his diary as he 'did' the festival.

by George Csaba Koller



Robert Morley thinks the proof is in the pudding. Jacqueline Bisset and George Segal wait to see in *The Great Chefs*

On the afternoon of Opening Night, I enter the press room at the Plaza II. David Novek, with telephone welded to his ear, greets me warmly. He is repping *In Praise of Older Women*, having left his National Film Board publicity job some time back. Paul Almond comes in with his newly tanned, California wife and Marc Gervais, who seems to vaguely remember me from Cinema Canada's formative years. It takes a while to get my pass, since I'm not on the official list, but the phone

call from Cinema Canada does the trick. Then George Kaczender makes a brief appearance and I ask him in Hungarian for a pass to Opening Night for a young lady I have in mind, but he looks puzzled, throws up his hands, and says that they are way oversold.

Get a lift in a yellow Ford truck to Yonge and Queen and high tail it to the theatre where a huge crowd is gathered on the sidewalk. They hold me up at the door along with the

rest of the crowd. Even my press pass cannot get me through. George Anthony of the *Toronto Sun* sails through with a whole entourage while I wait around (but then the *Sun* is the official festival paper, an indication of Bill Marshall's shrewdness in reaching the masses). Assertion does the trick. After a long fruitless search, I find a seat way up in the balcony, cordoned off for the privileged gold passes and the press. Scores of people are left holding tickets with no seats. Some do not hesitate to express their anger. Wayne Clarkson, this year's festival director, appears to assure everyone without seats that the film will be re-screened at the Festival Cinema later in the evening. Then Secretary of State John Roberts is introduced to win the hearts and minds of this gala audience.

Roberts gets a cool reception (largely on account of anti-government sentiment, but perhaps because of his dilly dallying on the film policy) but makes a very strong statement against censorship, endearing him to all, judging from the applause. And finally the lights are dimmed, and through the magic of celluloid and big bucks, we are propelled back in time to Budapest, Hungary perspiring profusely under the burden of Papa Stalin in the fifties (and what's this?) "elderly" ladies initiating a young boy into sweet n' sweaty sex? Leave it to us Magyars to put the paprika back into puberty, but with finesse, noblesse oblige.

Actually, it is to the credit of director Kaczender, producer Robert Lantos, and director of photography Miklos Lente, that they managed in **In Praise of Older Women** to recreate the atmosphere of Budapest in the fifties without ever leaving Montreal. Down to the last minute detail, such as the ashtrays in the dance hall, the flashing neon signs, pictures of the political leaders on the wall, and the lead character young Andras humming the popular tunes of the day, as well as the impressionistic portrayal of the 1956 revolution, the spirit of our homeland is there. The explicit treatment of heterosexual encounters might raise a few eyebrows, but is healthy and refreshing in this age of sexual ambivalence. The audience for the most part disliked the film, even though it has a strong Canadian element, being that young Andras winds up escaping to this country after the abortive revolt, to continue his sexual conquests unabated. A male fantasy to be sure, but what red blooded man would turn down invitations from Karen Black, Marilyn Lightstone, Helen Shaver, Alexandra Stewart, and Susan Strasberg?

Over to City Hall in the rain where I find long line-ups for drinks and blaring disco music, wide plastic streamers, and huge balloons. The whole affair is a bit chintzy, despite the assembled notables. Karen Black makes an entrance with hubby Kit Carson. Donald Pilon and Chuck Shamata exchange macho acting talk. Don Owen is complaining about almost being kept out of the opening. Kaczender makes a brief appearance, but one has the impression that the real party is elsewhere.

Wake up Friday at noon and catch Murray Markowitz on a Hamilton talk show rapping about **Hugs and Kisses**. He says that Demeter was done in by jealous people who envied his success and great wealth, and the Hungarian connection

is there again. The whole town is buzzing with film talk and film people. Over to Canadian Film Institute luncheon at Plaza II, meet Frederik Manter in the lobby, an old friend from the days when he used to be Cinema Canada's advertising manager. Kelly O'Brien and others are there, and the circle is complete, because Wayne Clarkson hails from the CFI as well. They hand out press kits, including new books on Don Shebib and Richard Leiterman, put out by Piers Handling and the publications section. John Foster of *Movie Works* rushes about with a huge cross around his neck, having taken on the task of publishing a daily paper for the duration of the festival.

Head down to the Marketplace, a collection of commercial booths featuring product from various publications and film companies. Back to the lobby to sit awhile and chat with Dennis Zahoruk of **Brethren** fame about his new script **Evil Eye**, based on an outline by Peter Bryant.

Nelson Smith C.A. appears and invites us up for a drink at the hospitality lounge on the fifth floor, which turns out to be *the* place to hang out and pick up gossip and be attuned to the festival's central nervous system.

In the following week, this very comfortable hotel suite is to be deluged with stars and sparkling, beautiful people, all eager to be close to the hub of this fast revolving wheel of fortune set in motion by Bill Marshall and company.

Go to see **Marie-Anne**, a film from Alberta with a feminine point of view, starring Andrée Pelletier as a beautiful, strong willed woman who turns out to be the first white lady west of Saskatchewan among the fur traders and Indians. She has a quasi-mystical confrontation with a fierce Indian woman, her husband's ex-lover, and ends up saving the day by an act of courage. It's a bit square what with its CBC like dramatics, nevertheless producer Fil Fraser did a fine job. There is a need for honest films about Canadian history, if our identity is to survive alongside the American, Australian, German and Italian bits of consciousness exhibited at festivals like this and in marketplaces throughout the world.

Back to the hospitality suite, where Helen Shaver comes in with a white poodle in a white outfit and she asks me for a light. She seems happy, high and not so holy, not knowing that next week she'll win the Etrog as Canada's best actress for her role in **Older Women**. Graham Coughtry is there and gives me an icy look, maybe because I don't have time to talk to him. Have to rush off to see a film. Sydney Newman makes one of his frequent appearances, and we both have club sandwiches (paid by us) along with drinks (courtesy of the Festival). The celebrities sink into their comfortable sofas and arm chairs, preparing to watch the Ali/Spinks fight on the large color TV. I rush off to see another film with an actress named Sandy.

Bloodbrothers turns out to be a nitty-gritty, working class drama about machoness in Italian American hardhats, but it does have its softer moments. The technical quality is excellent and the acting is quite natural, but this kind of film gets on my nerves after a while. In addition to the, by now arbitrary, tits 'n ass scenes and locker room language, bloody fights between men, wife beating, and sweaty camaraderie, one of the brothers has a sensitive side. He wants to quit construction and become a schoolteacher.

The next morning I make it to Yonge and Bloor in time to catch a bit of **Don's Party**, an Aussie film again about macho men who indulge in such sports as grabbing a well-

George Csaba Koller, former editor/publisher of Cinema Canada, is presently at work on a research project on Canadian experimental films. He hopes to write a book on the subject next year.

endowed lady, undressing and throwing her into the pool. Then they all undress and jump in after her and everyone runs around naked for the next half hour, with the more squeamish women offering the towels. Oh yes, there is a labor party election in there somewhere, but not in the sequence I saw, although they did have heavy handed discussions about socialism. Nice technical quality and some good acting.

After a quick trip to the hospitality suite, I run across the street to see **Violette Nozière**, Claude Chabrol's Canada/France co-production, which is a beautifully photographed (Jean Rabier) and costumed period piece (thirties) about this sexy young girl who has problems at home and decides to murder her parents in order to solve them. Her father could or could not have been having intercourse with her since she was 13 and her mother is a neurotically hysteric lady. Violette finds out that she has syphilis which can be hereditary, so she decides to blame it on her family. The film is a long and monotonous series of vignettes illuminating the internal world of this young lady. Cockeyed editing makes the plot hard to follow, but David Novek confirmed that 1.7 minutes were cut. But the film has an added impact, when it is revealed that Violette was a real life murderess saved from the guillotine by Marshall Petain, and then pardoned by Charles de Gaulle. "We do have some curious people in Paris," commented cinematographer Marc Champion after the screening.

Next is the world première of Ted Kotcheff's **Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?** Kotcheff and Micheline Lanctôt get seats in the last row of the balcony and I find myself sitting next to Oscar winner Beverly Shaffer. **Chefs** is a very well made film, Kotcheff knows his craft, but it is about over abundance and high cuisine, which at a time of economic crunch is perhaps a sardonic comment on western appetites and could be considered in bad taste. The film concerns Robert Morley as the epitomic epicure who runs a gastronomic magazine and knows all the great chefs of Europe personally. Anyway, the great chefs get knocked off one by one in the manner of their specialty: baked in an oven, boiled alive as a lobster, mashed as a rabbit, whatever. Jacqueline Bisset and George Segal play a likable couple who have divorced but get back together as the film progresses. She is one of the great chefs and he is a high rolling businessman specializing in fast foods. Well photographed, well acted and humorously scripted, it is not a screamer throughout, but one scene where Segal walks into a subdued vegetarian restaurant and loudly and graphically describes how he's going to open up a place next door where he'll butcher the steer right at your table sending the gentle patrons scurrying for the door, is hilarious. If you are scrimping on your weekly food budget, go see **Great Chefs**. Maybe you'll get vicarious heartburn.

Saturday go to see **Girl Friends**, director Claudia Weill's 16mm feature blown up to 35mm. Off beat beginning about two girl friends, one blonde and WASP, the other curly black haired and Jewish, the real heroine of the film. Blonde gets married and Susan Weinblatt, played by Melanie Mayron, is left alone to cope with the problems of getting started as a photographer. She has a touching love thing going with a middle-aged rabbi (Eli Wallach) and he at one point kisses her passionately on the lips. Later, she picks up a young hitchhiking lady who helps Susan come out of her shell. Not unlike the proverbial butterfly from the cocoon, the awkward, sometimes snotty Jewish kid with glasses is transformed by the

end of the film into a desirable woman. She goes back to see the blonde periodically, and her girl friend's relationship with husband and baby provides good male/female contrast in this liberated age. Well acted, shot and scripted, this film received a standing ovation when it was shown at Cannes. The reception at Toronto's Towne Cinema is more subdued.

There is not enough space to continue in this detailed fashion. I just wanted to give an idea of what it was like covering this major event. The facts have been recorded elsewhere. Total attendance at the festival topped 75,000, making it one of the biggest film festivals in the world. The organizers kept assuring everyone that they did not sell more passes than seats but the contrary was obvious. For this reason, they extended the festival, repeating some of the major attractions for those who could not get in the first time. Cinema Canada asked for interviews with both Bill Marshall and Wayne Clarkson but the request was denied by the press room.



Brad Davis takes a rest as the real Billy Hayes looks on during the shoot of **Midnight Express** in Malta

The festival had too many films for any one journalist to attend, so I decided early on to be very selective. Of the new Australian cinema series, **The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith** was the most outstanding. Directed by Fred Schepisi, this film is gripping in its subject matter and exhibits a very high standard of technical excellence. About a young aborigine, who is sometimes mistreated but more or less accepted by the white settlers down under, **Jimmy Blacksmith** nevertheless explodes with gruesomely explicit racial violence. The film has imperfections, but it keeps the viewer on the edge of his seat throughout its 122 minutes.

The most cathartic moment at the Festival occurred after the screening of **Midnight Express** when Billy Hayes made



The coup d'état explodes into action as the military storms the airport in **Power Play**

an appearance. The film we saw depicted his somewhat dramatized, but mostly true story of going through hell for five years in a Turkish prison. Having been picked up at Istanbul airport with a large quantity of hashish taped to his body, Billy Hayes was caught up in the nightmare world of the Turkish system of "justice," which decided to use him as an example to other young westerners who might entertain similar get rich quick ideas. Sentenced to three years, Billy is told on the day of his release that another twenty years has been imposed on him. Brad Davis, as Hayes, goes understandably berserk at this point. One of the most powerful scenes in any movie of recent memory takes place when his girl friend finally saves up enough money to visit Billy after four years. By this time he is almost a zombie. As soon as they are left alone in the visiting room, with a glass partition dividing them, he's overtaken by her low-cut blouse and asks to see her breasts. Taken out of context this sounds crass, but it is one of the most touching love scenes ever filmed. He finally kills the head prison guard and makes a dramatic escape. It is not surprising that audiences everywhere have been giving Billy Hayes standing ovations after the film. Toronto was no exception. A further note on the power of cinema in general: 47 days after the film was shown in Washington D.C., the U.S. government signed an extradition treaty with Turkey for the exchange of such prisoners.

And finally, an equally gripping movie, this one a Canadian/Anglo co-production, directed by Martyn Burke, produced by Chris Dalton, and starring Peter O'Toole, David Hemmings, Donald Pleasence, and Barry Morse. **Power Play** takes place in a mythical European country, but just as **State of Siege**, it could happen anywhere. When terrorism causes brutal government repression, or vice versa, a number of high echelon military leaders, instigated by a well meaning cabinet minister, decide to stage a coup. Hemmings plays the noble

Colonel, a family man, about to retire but moved by his conscience to act. O'Toole plays a flamboyant tank commander, who is slow to convince but does join the coup, for entirely different reasons. Morse plays the cabinet minister and Pleasence is superbly evil as the symbol of the repressive government. Chuck Shamata makes a brilliant entrance as the coup's security chief, in a scene that will probably go down in Canadian movie history. As the plotters sit around a conference table discussing the tactics of the coup, Shamata puts a bit of terror in their hearts as he replays, on a hidden tape recorder, everything they've just said and jumps in front of them with a submachine gun placing them under mock arrest. "Gentlemen, you should be more careful next time," he says conchantly. "This could have been the real thing." And so could the rest of the movie, which has a very twisted, if not totally unexpected, ending. The pace is brisk, the acting is of an evenly high quality with O'Toole's brilliance shining through and the rest of the production values do just credit to the highly talented, largely Canadian production team responsible for **Power Play**.

Epilogue: the sidewalk outside 21 McGill Street, an exclusive Toronto's women's club, looked just like a scene from **Power Play**. At least a dozen heavy looking dudes with walkie talkies who claimed to be "parking attendants for the limousines," were looking out for the security of the notables assembled inside. The downstairs gymnasium featured the music and the dancing, while the upstairs reception room had a cocktail party atmosphere. Both were packed tightly with celebrities, and the champagne flowed freely. Earlier in the evening, the Canadian Film Awards ceremonies took place at the Ryerson theatre, of which a CBC television special was taped by Bill Marshall and his team. "Stars galore," is how one participant described the largest bash ever thrown by the film industry in Toronto, and probably in Canada. □

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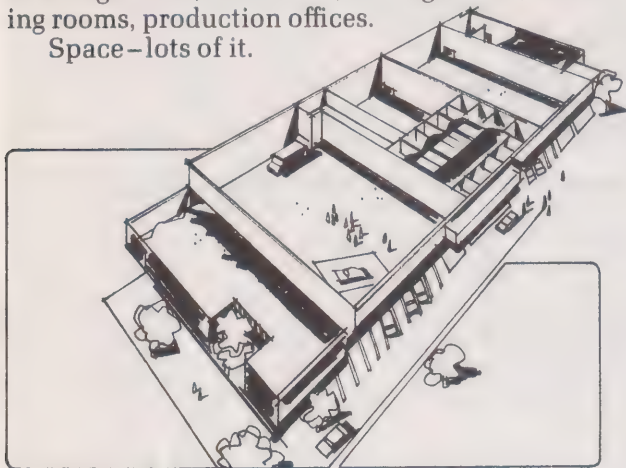
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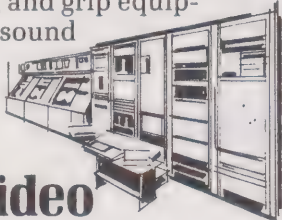
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VS.

the feminists

by Anne Cameron

Anne Cameron participated in a film festival in Vancouver recently and had an uncomfortable time. She has written an uncomfortable article, and many readers may disapprove. But that doesn't worry the author. Meanwhile, jurists across the country may rise to salute her. Like those who did the preselection for the Canadian Film Awards, only to have to spend \$25 to see the show, Cameron learned that judging isn't all it's trumped up to be.



Illustrations by Don Arioli

I was sitting at my desk, staring out the window, watching my erratic neighbours totally insane Maltese bounce at the end of his tie-cord, pretending I was working on my novel, knowing in my heart of hearts that all I was doing was fantasizing more ways to get rid of the yapping dog. I'd been through the more obvious ways, like charge out of the house, run across the road and kick the little sucker to death, and had gotten to the more esoteric planning stage. I'd take fibre glass insulation, roll it up inside little balls of tempting hamburger, feed it to the ugly little scum and sit back and laugh while he died a slow and agonizing death, his innards shredded by the glass fibres, his yap-yap-yap diminishing as he weakened... and the phone rang.

It always does. I might have been able to swing from the yapping dog to an international spy thriller, written a script that would have been snatched up by hungry producers, made a smash hit movie and gotten rich and been able to move to... this week it's Little Cayman Island, I understand it is not only eternally warm there, they have few phones and a Canadian dollar will still buy a cup of coffee. A demi-tasse, no doubt.

The voice on the other end of the phone asked me if I would consider being on the jury of the Feminist Film and Video Festival in Vancouver. I've never been on any kind of a jury, not even the kind where the law demands you give up your job, home, and family, and decide fine points of law for eleven dollars a day. Besides, I'm a sucker for anything that might improve the disgusting lack of opportunity for talented women in film. So I said yes. Before we agreed that I would, in fact, be part of the jury, the caller stressed a point. "One thing," she warned, "this is a *feminist* film festival." "Yeah?" I replied with my usual verbal skills showing. "Are you sure you can work with *feminists*?" I was going to laugh, but she sounded dreadfully serious, which, somehow, 'everybody' does, more's the pity, so instead of laughing I tried a little humour for the folks on the mainland, a little Vancouver Island humour, which I keep forgetting is not always understood. "I've even been known to be able to work with men." I don't think I should have said that.

Anyway, we patched up that misunderstanding, and made arrangements for me to receive a package explaining the concept and planning of the feminist film festival. It wasn't a big package and it didn't take me long to read it, but it didn't answer very many of my questions.

Over I went to the mainland and braved the mysteries of the Vancouver transit system. Of course, I had help; a friend of mine met me and escorted me because I'm always getting on the right bus on the wrong side of the street, thus going away from instead of towards my supposed destination. My friends tell me the rest of my life is like that, too, the right bus, but the wrong direction and me watching out the window in happy ignorance, enjoying the scenery anyway.

I have to admit, right off the bat, that I didn't get to every viewing evening and didn't see all the entries. It isn't always easy to cross 42 miles of water (3 hours from downtown Nanaimo to downtown Vancouver), then make it clear across town on busses, even when you have people who will guide you like the badly directed hillbilly you are. Sometimes one

gets detoured. The more bits and snippets of bad film I saw the easier it was to get detoured. I have an alter-ego lives inside the sophisticated, demure veneer I present to the world. (!) Her name is Fireweed Anne, and she's eleven and a half years old. Her hair is unruly, she has a patch on the knee of her jeans and a Black Diamond softball mitt hangs from her belt. She chews DoubleBubble gum and snaps it viciously and looks with gimlet eyes on the doin's of the Big People. She also makes rude mental comments when bullshit tries to baffle brains and on those rare occasions when I lose my temper (which of course Never Happens) she stands on the sidelines yelling Sic 'em Cami... she loves good film and will sit with me happily through untold playings of **Duchess** and **the Dirtwater Fox** or **The Conversation**, but she curls up and goes to sleep when it's bad film and helped me do something in Toronto that I have never before done, not since I saw my first film at age six (it was **Lassie Come Home**). I walked out of a film, an event not unnoticed by half a dozen of my friends. An event I thought would be cause for Trudeau to declare a national holiday. And Fireweed Anne was not enjoying being around during the judging of the entries for the feminist film festival. I resisted the temptations she offered with dedicated zeal and did not detour by way of the aquarium to watch the whales. I did not go to watch the human zoo on Skid Row. I didn't even pop into the planetarium to see what the other kind of stars were doing, but I did miss some of the showings.

I get hardnosed and difficult when things which are supposed to kick off at seven haven't kicked off at eight. I begin to feel like a fool when I've been five hours in the journeying and find myself, out of a supposed jury of twelve, one of four in a viewing room. I get downright mean natured when I suspect that whatever the jury thinks or doesn't think a film will be shown at the festival anyway, *if* the right person wants that film shown. For whatever reason. "Why're you bothering to mark all them dumb pieces of paper when you *know* she's gonna show that dirty piece of trash?" F/A kept asking. And I didn't have an answer for her. And the piece of trash got shown even though it was ripped apart by the members of the jury present when it was previewed.

And people begin to dislike me intensely when I ask awkward questions. Like the one I asked the very first night of previewing. We'd sat through a couple of hours of agonizingly bad pieces of drivel and F/A was giving me a lot of trouble and the friend who had escorted me to the proper place was falling asleep and we broke for coffee. Nobody seemed to "know" anybody else and we were all being kind of hesitant and stiff and F/A gave me a kick in the slats that caused me to turn to the woman who had phoned me in the first place. I reminded her of the phone conversation and her question about whether or not I was sure I could work with *feminists*, and then F/A made me ask "What is a 'feminist'?"

Well, you don't ask questions like that, I guess. There was just silence. Everybody looked at everybody else. I, of course, *knew* in my heart of hearts they were looking at each other and thinking Christ, is she dumb! So I asked it again a different way. "What, exactly, do you mean when you say *feminist*?" The silence just got deeper, darker, and more disapproving. Finally, a woman filmmaker grinned at me and said "you're surrounded by a room full of them." F/A nudged me and I replied "I'm in a room full of women. If all wo-

Anne Cameron is the author of many poems and plays and of the screenplays for the films, *The Dreamspeaker*, *A Matter of Choice*, and *Drying Up The Streets*.

men are feminists, why ask the question. Can't men be feminists too?" Nobody answered that one.

I guess I'm still waiting for an answer to my question. I'm getting so confused about "the movement" that the more I read and ask, the less I understand.



Some very nice pieces of work done by women didn't get shown at the film festival. Pardon me, the Feminist Film Festival. Some pieces of unmitigated trash did get shown. And I don't understand that, either.

I didn't even attend all of the festival. So what, you ask, is she doing writing an article, she didn't go to all the judging,

she didn't understand what was meant by feminist, and she didn't attend the festival in its entirety; well, probably nobody else is going to write anything at all about it and nature abhors a vacuum (grade seven English, parables and quotations).

The festival ran from Friday to Sunday, inclusive and on Friday I was flying back from Toronto and the film awards and festival (where I walked out of my first film; a Canadian film at that, I just couldn't stand the tank and the crushed tent and found it impossible to endure another minute). Friday night I had a poetry reading in Vancouver, but on Saturday I went to the Feminist Film Festival. I was supposed to be part of a panel that was supposed to discuss Women, the Law, Violence against Women and Alternatives. The panel never really happened, or rather the panel happened, we just didn't discuss anything and I'm not sure why, everything was such confusion and none of us seemed to know what we were doing there.

I did see a couple of really nice films and the food facilities were extremely well set up, with good food available at reasonable prices.

And I had the wonderful experience of hearing Barbara Martineau give a talk on the history of women in film. A talk I think this magazine ought to print in its entirety because of the sheer superior quality of content. The audience not only enjoyed the talk, they asked if it would be possible to get copies and asked a question that needs answering; *why* don't we hear, read and see more about the women who have made good films and meaningful contributions to the history of film?

After Martineau's talk, I left. It was partly spite, partly the fact I *knew* the rest of the afternoon would be downhill and it's VanIsle to leave when the party is at its peak and go home with good memories. The spite? Well, I have a very small mind. My friend and I walked up to the front door and went inside and were asked if we were "registered." I said I'd only come to participate in the panel discussion and a little woman with an aggressive face and even more aggressive attitude told me I'd have to pay to get in anyway. For a start, anybody with an aggressive face and aggressive attitude isn't going to see the sunny side of *me*. Then there's the red-necked reactionary in me who is turned off by anybody who mixes their sexual identity and their politics and waves it in my face by gluing sequins (bright red ones) to the back of a jean jacket and walks around like a living advertisement for "Lesbian Unity." I openly admit, that kind of public display threatens me. I don't know *why* it threatens me and I don't care why it threatens me, but F/A just mutters "tacky tacky tacky" and I agree with her. Suddenly all I could think of was My God, three return trips by ferry at ten bucks a trip, then add the cost of meals while away from home and how many hours sitting on a hard chair watching crap and filling out forms and this little runt with the confrontation syndrome sticking out of her ears, wants another five bucks? "Bullshit" said F/A. "I'm not paying a cent," I said and walked in as bold as brass. I was told I could stay for the panel discussion but I wasn't to watch any films. And to spite them (because you will find few people more small minded than me when there's a point to be made or a nit to be picked) I watched two! So there!

We didn't go to the dance they threw on Saturday night. Cleo Laine was appearing at the Queen Elizabeth and we went to sit in comfortable seats and watch Professionalism at work

on stage. "Howcum you can't sing like that?" F/A asked and didn't pop her gum once in nearly three hours. After Cleo we went to my friend's place to listen to records, having agreed that there was no way we wanted to walk out of an evening of first rate music to go to a dance where they didn't even have a live band. VanIsle logic again, you don't ruin a good meal with a lousy desert!

And Sunday there were too many other things to do that seemed preferable to tangling with the aggressive lady at the front door; because there was no way at that point that I was going to pay, you understand! Besides we didn't get out of bed until nearly noon, jet lag and ten days in Tarana had caught up with me.

I still don't know what a *feminist* is. I do know women are making film. Some of it is bad. Some of it is very, very good. I watched and admired a half hour film *Anastasia* by a Quebec filmmaker, Paule Baillergeon and thought it as fine a short as I had seen; made with practically no money, using a theatre group of dedicated actors and actresses and, so far, not only ignored but deliberately suppressed by "everyone." The National Film Board, which seems somehow to help train and develop many less talented filmmakers, just refused to help this woman make a second film. Some of the stuff the NFB entered in the feminist film festival wasn't one-tenth the film *Anastasia* is, so I don't understand their decision process at all. Does anybody?

Women are making film and have a long history of making film. The history, like many women's films is being suppressed. They aren't teaching it in film courses, they aren't telling us or showing us. Good films are sitting in archives and libraries, being deliberately ignored. So every generation of bright young women who want to make film wind up having to find out for themselves, re-make mistakes other women have had to make, use up a lot of energy and time stumbling and experimenting, re-tracing the same rocky paths.

It's a good way to keep us from forging ahead and making real progress.

I guess some men out there are going to say Pshaw, more Womens Lib bullshit, I don't believe it, so what... there aren't enough *good* filmmakers in this country to support a national film industry. The women who could help and make vital contributions are being suppressed. It isn't only to the benefit of women that we be allowed into the sacred fields, it's to your benefit, too. We aren't all wearing confrontation messages on our backs, we aren't all politically committed to hating, distrusting or antagonizing men. Hell, some of us have even managed to work with you! But I suspect too many men are too locked in to the old silliness and believe the stereotypes. And of course, the bad filmmakers in the country don't want anybody showing them up as bad filmmakers.

I hope, for all the mistakes, misunderstandings and fumbings that there is a feminist film festival in Vancouver again next year. I will not sit on the jury, I will not donate hours of time and nearly ninety dollars to the festival and I will not sit on a panel that doesn't really happen. I'll just go, pay my money and see some films.

Maybe the only people who can ever enjoy a film festival are those who didn't have to work to make it happen!

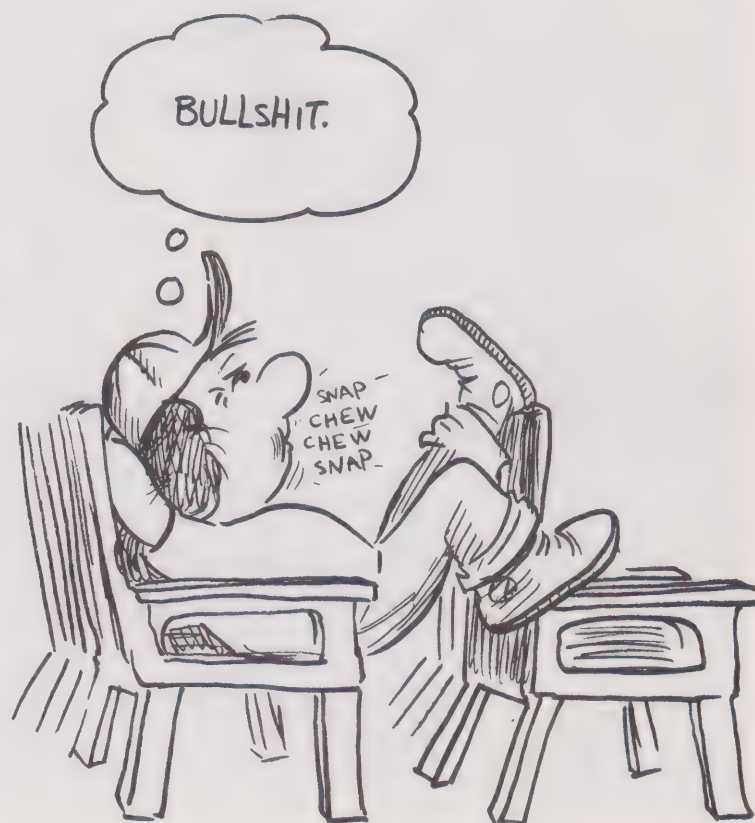
And I hope that in future, as we find out more about our own history and see and hear more from people like Barbara Martineau, our prickly discomfort will start to diminish and we'll stop being so antagonistic and so quick to create a con-

frontation. I think there is more place for a *Woman's Film Festival* than a *Feminist Film Festival* because I think I am not the only person in the world who is no longer sure what the word feminist means. There was nothing happening that I could see that would have made a man feel welcome at that festival. If feminism means segregation by sex, then I am not a feminist. I have two sons and it might come as one hell of a shock to the several women with sequin'ed messages on their jackets, but my sons are human beings too, and as decent as their sister. And I refuse to live in a world, however *feminist* where my sons are not welcome. Radical anything makes me uncomfortable. Shrill screaming and deliberate impoliteness make me angry. And anybody who sets up a confrontation situation with me has just found all the confrontation they're apt to be able to handle! We don't have to be impolite, mouthy and deliberately insulting. Surely to god there is room still for good manners, pleasant faces, smiles and even a small touch of humour. I know there are a lot of men who have not yet learned the first thing about equality but we aren't going to teach them by making them so unwelcome and uncomfortable that they don't show up to see the films!

There isn't much future in talking to already listening ears; especially if what you're saying is closing some of those ears. And mine aren't as open as they were a few months ago.

But I still think there is room for women oriented film, for film festivals showing the work women are doing, and room for all the encouragement we can give to young women who want to work in film.

It's all this damned militant radicalism makes me agree totally with F/A that it's time to leave, the party's getting rough. □



powerhouse presents

In Montreal, there was another festival, less passionate, perhaps, than Vancouver's Feminist Festival, but important as a show place for Canadian women's films. Jane Dick gives a short report.

by Jane Dick

A selection of films concerning women's issues and made by Canadian women filmmakers was shown at Montreal's Le Cinéma Parallèle October 10-14, presented by Powerhouse Gallery. The main emphasis of Powerhouse is to provide a centre which reflects the trends of women artists. The

Jane Dick is a free-lance writer living in Montreal.

film festival was conceived as an extension of this. Femmedia and Studio 'D' of the National Film Board also assisted in the festival.

Seventeen films were presented, most of them from Montreal and Toronto and they played to packed houses every night. Proceeds were shared 50-50 between Powerhouse and Le Cinéma Parallèle.

Most of the films were documentary though there were a few animated films, including three by Veronika Soul, and two fiction films — Lois Siegel's **Recipe to Cook a Clown** and Nesya Shapiro's **Passages**. Among the documentaries were several portraits of individual women.

Patricia's Moving Picture (Bonnie Klein) talks with a west coast woman

photo: Chris Holland



Kay Armatage was among the filmmakers on hand to discuss film



Cross-country skiing isn't what it used to be in Lois Siegel's **Recipe to Cook a Clown**

who, at 40 with seven children, has to deal with a massive state of depression and comes out of it a much stronger and happier person. Designed as a catalyst for discussion, the film presents challenging situations but wisely draws no conclusions.

Jill Johnston... October 1975 (Lydia Wazana and Kay Armatage) follows Jill Johnston, author of *Lesbian Nation*, during one week of public readings and interviews in Toronto. The film captures her in transit, showing a woman at work, and though interesting and sympathetic, is not always flattering. Jill Johnston has since refused to allow the film to be shown in the U.S.

Lady from Grey County (Janice H. Brown and Margaret Westcott) is a well-wrought portrayal of Agnes Campbell Macphail, Canada's first woman Member of Parliament. As the film brings Macphail back to life via old stills, newsclips, and some of her own writings, we see a woman of considerable personal courage and resource. The film is also an important historical document since it chronicles a turbulent period of social and political change in Canada.

D'Abord Ménagères (Luce Guilbeault) interviews several women and one man who work outside the home but are still solely responsible for housework and childcare. Pointed and thought-provoking, it is unfortunately too long and often repetitive.

Some American Feminists (Nicole Brossard, Luce Guilbeault, and Margaret Westcott) interviews some of the more influential feminists in the women's movement. Again, they are seen in a particular place, time and frame of mind, but the historical perspective is clearly defined, and the interviews and their intercutting with one another are very articulate.

Though most of the films dealt with women's issues, *The Thin Line*, made by Holly Dale and Janis Cole, two recent graduates of Sheridan College, takes a look at the maximum security mental health centre at Penetanguishene, Ontario which houses men who have committed some of the most brutal crimes including rape and murder. The men interviewed for the film contributed a great deal to the structuring and ultimate purpose of the film — it is essentially, theirs — and it is a remarkable statement on the human capacity

for understanding and self-help. The NFB has bought ten prints of this film.

On Friday afternoon of the festival a workshop was held at Powerhouse Gallery. It was to be concerned with "Feminist Film Criticism: The Direct Approach." It was not. However, in a loose and relaxed atmosphere, those present were given the opportunity to meet with Holly Dale and Janis Cole, Kay Armatage, Bonnie Klein, and Ardele Lister — director of *So Where's My Prince Already?*, an overdone satire made by Reel Images, a no longer active women's media co-op in B.C., with, happily, a brilliantly funny animated sequence by Floy Zitten. Participants also saw the premiere of Kay Armatage's latest film, *Gertrude and Alice in Passing*, a charming and intelligent eight minute piece that explores, among other things, the camera as voyeur.

The workshop was not well attended — at least half the people there had to be — they were women involved in the making of the films presented — but discussions were both lively and thoughtful and with more publicity in the future, it has definite possibilities as a forum for women who make films. □



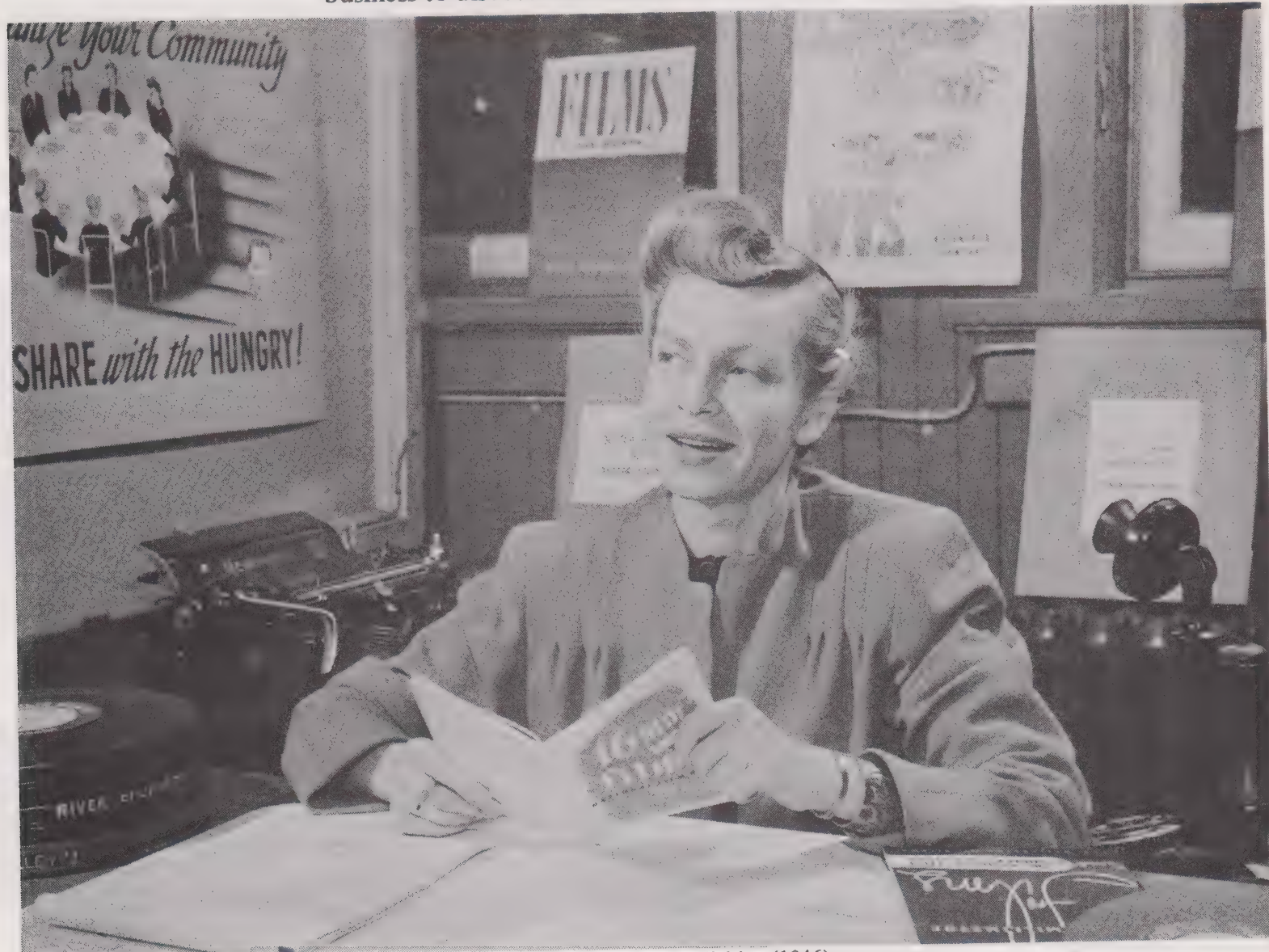
A wall poster in Luce Guilbeault's *D'Abord Ménagères*

notes for a study of **women's history in the media**

by Barbara Halpern Martineau

It is a fact that women have had a more difficult time making their way in filmmaking than have men. Yet women have participated importantly, both as independent filmmakers and as public servants in Canada. Barbara Halpern Martineau has made it her business to discover the facts.

photo: Chris Lund



Calais Calvert handling the Women and Welfare section at the NFB distribution division (1946)

Theme:

As women and as Canadians we share the problematic goal of emerging as users of the tools of media as opposed to being tools of those who use media.

Remembrance:

Masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice. Jane Austen should have laid a wreath upon the grave of Fanny Burney, and George Eliot done homage to the robust shade of Eliza Carta – the valiant old woman who tied a bell to her bedstead in order that she might wake early and learn Greek. All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn... for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds.

— Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own," 1928.

There is a double edge to these words of Virginia Woolf: an understanding of art in relation to the mass, and an understanding of the collectivity of women's experience in the arts, an experience which has been political/economic as well as creative/individualistic. No artist creates in isolation, although it may seem that way — art either challenges or perpetuates ideology, the illusions we are fed by the ruling system. I would, therefore, like to offer the following points to take into account when preparing to study women's history in the media:

1) That media, as we know it, is essentially *mass* media, designed (mechanically reproduced) to reach as many people as possible. 1

2) that, therefore, any study of media must look carefully at the relationship between the product and its audience (which no one has yet figured out how to do) — how do images relate to social reality? What do they reinforce and what do they challenge?

3) Such a study must also consider the relationship between the maker of the product and the ideological and economic structures of her or his society. Who is saying what to whom and for what reason? (Note that it's much easier to maintain established ideologies than to change them.)

4) That, as Virginia Woolf pointed out with reference to women writers, a woman must first have a room of her own if she is to create, that is, she must have a measure of economic independence.

5) And so a history of women in media must take into account the economic history of women in the twentieth century and also the economic history of the media.

More words from the past:

There is nothing connected with the staging of a motion picture that a woman cannot do as easily as a man, and there is no reason why she cannot completely master every technicality of the art. (Referring to the need for long careful study of photography and stage direction

Barbara Halpern Martineau is currently teaching film production and theory at Queen's University in Kingston. She recently completed *Good Day Care: One Out of Ten*, a half-hour documentary film.

she concludes) both are as suitable, as fascinating and as remunerative to a woman as to a man.

— Alice Guy Blaché, 'Women's Place in Photoplay Production,' "Moving Picture World," July 11, 1914. 2

From Alice Guy to, I would argue, every woman and man engaged in the practice of filmmaking today, we all know that money and economic considerations are crucial. What is needed is an understanding of the connections between the economics of the media, particularly as they relate to women, and the ideology or counter-ideology of films in their effect on audiences.

photo: W. Doucette



Microfilm Recordak camera is loaded by Pat Poulton at the NFB laboratories, John and Susses Streets, Ottawa (1947)

Now:

It is only six years since we first began to realize that there is material for a history of women in the media, only six years since the first international festival of women's films in New York opened the way which other festivals and then study groups and conferences and women's studies courses and writers and scholars were to follow, of finding forgotten and neglected films made by women, bringing them together for screenings and discussions, looking for confirmation that women can make films, that we have since the beginning of filmmaking made films, that therefore we have every reason to assume we will continue to make films in increasing numbers. Because it is very difficult and very commonplace, we all know, having grown up female, to be told — you can't do that — girls can't do that — only boys can build towers, play baseball, fly planes, earn money, make films.

Many women are still trying to prove that girls can make films. But Alice Guy, who made the world's first fiction film in 1896, proved that by doing it over eighty years ago. And it's been proved over and over, by Lois Weber, Mabel Normand, Germaine Dulac, Esther Shub, Lotte Reiniger, our own Nell Shipman — who once jumped thirty feet into an icy, rock-bordered stream to spare a pregnant stunt woman and insisted that the woman be paid her \$10. anyway. These pioneer filmwomen, all important innovators in their fields, were followed in every decade in every country where film industries have existed by capable, often brilliant women filmmakers and television producers. Women have made feminist films and films you would never know a woman made if you weren't told: scientific, educational, experimental films, even recently exploitation features, and a couple of big-budget Hollywood films. These are all fuel for the argument that women are not biologically incapable of making films like men, a response to what I call the

bi 0 logical phallacy

but that argument is superficial, not key. The important questions and answers lie elsewhere, in a materialist analysis of history and in an ideological analysis of mass media.

The example closest to home is the story of how Canadian women played a strong creative role in making films at the National Film Board under John Grierson during World War II. There was no doubt then that women such as Jane Marsh, Evelyn Spice Cherry, Gudrun Parker, Judith Crawley, Margaret Perry, and many more could produce, direct, photograph, take sound, write, edit, and do research for films still studied as powerful examples of propaganda and education. It was wartime and the men were overseas — women were needed on the home front; women could do anything: build planes, fly them, do heavy farm work and factory work, make films about it all. Jane Marsh made a film about what women were doing, for which her title was **Work for Women**. (The NFB changed it to **Women Are Warriors**.) Her research began with a scathing indictment of the way women have been suppressed over the centuries, and her commentary in the film suggests that women would stay in the salaried workforce if they could.

But immediately after the war, as the troops returned looking for their old jobs and the country converted to a peacetime economy, women were laid off in great numbers. Films, magazines, all aspects of mass media including the films of the NFB joined in the praises of domestic life for women, the joys of unpaid work in the kitchen and nursery. Most of the women at the NFB left, for one reason or another — Jane Marsh was forced to resign for daring to argue with Grierson, who later told her she'd been right, but that he would never give in to a woman. She remarked about women's attitudes in those early years: "They were so grateful to be working in interesting jobs that they didn't realize they were slaves." 3

The lesson to be learned from that period of World War II, which had such a strong impact on both the content of the media and the position of women within the media, is that it is simply not enough to say, or even to prove, that girls can make films.

What we now, as women and Canadians must ask, and answer, is how to use the tools of film as opposed to being tools of the users of film (the powers that be). This means having control of the means of production and understanding the potential of the media.

A voice from now, south of the border:

From what is the 'independent' filmmaker or artist independent? She is not independent from the need to make a living. She is not independent from the need for capital — money which gives the power to make her films and distribute her films within a tight commercial media monopoly. When a feminist wonders why capitalists won't hand over the money to make anti-sexist films, she, like her 'independent' male counterpart, must face the terms of her dependence. She has begun to beg, borrow or steal (translated as win grants, go into debt, etc.) the capital to write herself into visual history making films about the experience of women; viz: the films of Julia Reichert, Yvonne Rainer, Barbara Kopple, Chantal Ackerman and many others. But who actually sees these films? They are shown in women's film festivals, in avant-garde and political forums in a few major cities. She is, in short, caught in that same economic trap. Cooperatives for pooling resources and sharing distributor efforts, such as New Day Films, are beginning to form; they are collectives like Heresies. But the absolute dependence on the inconsistent, discriminate charity of liberals is the underside of that ultimately romantic hope for 'independence.' The terms for independence, then, among artists and feminists, are the very terms of dependence. Yet another contradiction.

— Joan Braderman, 'Juggling Contradictions: Feminism, the Individual and What's Left,' "Heresies," no. 1, January, 1977.

In the early days of film it was taken for granted that film was both a business and an art, and it was only when film became big business that film, as art, retreated to the sidelines of avant-garde, experimental, underground, sometimes political endeavor. There is a tendency to make sharp distinctions between "commercial" films and "art" films, a tendency which has caused dissension in the women's movement, and some polarization. Some feminist critics have claimed that only commercial features and contemporary radical films should be considered in a feminist context because they alone present the stereotypes and the analyses of the stereotypes (in the case of radical films) which have oppressed women in forms we can recognize and criticize. Other feminist critics argue that the language of commercial films and many "radical" films is a patriarchal language, developed by a patriarchal industry, and that only in experimental films can women find the new language appropriate to feminists. All these arguments are based on the understanding that there are film languages, ways of conveying meaning other than simply by words on the soundtrack or titles, for example, the way people are dressed conveys meaning, as do the ways they are lit, framed, presented. 4

Such dialogue can be very useful to the development of a new women's aesthetic if carried on constructively, and it has important implications for the practice of filmmaking. Historical perspective can help to avoid polarization for instance, so studying the film **The Smiling Madame Beudet** by Germaine Dulac (France, 1923) shows how experimental techniques and popular melodramatic form were combined to express a powerful and accessible early vision of a married woman's oppression. Understanding the context of French filmmaking at the time and the fact that it was a time of widespread unrest and activity among women, followed by heavy repression, helps to explain how such a film came to



Women at the Film Board, past and present, always active

be made and why it has been neglected for so long and why it was not followed by many others in the same tradition.

I think that one of the most important and exciting developments of the conjuncture of the new women's movement, the discovery of the existence of hundreds of forgotten films by women, and the work of developing feminist theories of culture and ideology, has been that women are again changing and transgressing the lines of demarcation between popular and experimental, between commercial and artistic, between political and entertaining films; and we are seeking ways of expressing our ideas which are accessible to the majority of viewers. This has necessitated continual questioning, both theoretical and practical, of assumptions about how to make films, about how films affect people.

Some pitfalls are becoming apparent:

A) In feature films, it is not enough to have women in major roles, or even women who do exciting things. Films, unlike reality, have morals — if a strong woman dies or is raped or punished in any way, a connection is made between her strength and the punishment — i.e., a woman is punished for being strong, as Katherine Hepburn was in Dorothy Arzner's memorable film *Christopher Strong* (1933, U.S.). Nelly Kaplan hit that one head-on in *A Very Curious Girl*. And *La fiancée du pirate* (1970, France) was a film about a woman's revenge on an entire village.

B) There is a dominant tradition in feature films that the heroine must be conventionally beautiful and well-dressed,

usually surrounded by expensive trappings. Heroes, on the other hand, can be homely and shabby if they are interesting and strong.

C) Makers of alternative films have often, at their peril, ignored the strength of feature film conventions and failed to pay attention to audience expectations of technical competence, entertainment value, pacing, etc., and to the implications of using conventionally beautiful images of women, conventional narrative forms etc. So, two further points to add to our original five: (see above)

6) We must take into account the history of the representation of women in art and how artistic conventions have been oppressive of women (5) so that

7) Women can figure out how to express progressive attitudes in forms which are both accessible and non-exploitative.

Most people are most exposed to the glut of patriarchal ideology which dominates all the media. To oppose this is to take on enormous odds. The history of women's filmmaking offers some very positive examples of feature films which present alternatives to conventional narrative and subject matter, for instance: Lois Weber's *The Blot* (1921, U.S.) which shows that romance is dependent on economic reality and avoids a fairytale ending of happy couples; Leontine Sagan's *Maedchen in Uniform* (1931, Germany), Marie Epstein's *La Maternelle* (1933, France) and Astrid Henning-

Jensen's *Die Pokkersunger* (*Those Blasted Kids* 1947, Denmark) which treat children in unsentimental ways as subject to oppression closely tied to the oppression of women. *But*, we have to look to much more recent films, mostly *not* fiction features to find attractive images of women who are not conventionally beautiful, images of women which relate to work and politics and not necessarily romance or domesticity.

One early reaction of feminist theoreticians to the question of how women *should* make films, based on analysis of past practice, was that women should at all costs avoid the illusion of realism, because so-called realism in films expressing dominant ideologies has fed myths which are oppressive of women. More recently, it has been pointed out that we need not throw out the baby with the bath water, that while realizing the dangers of "realism" it is also important to show women images of ourselves which we can believe in and relate to, even while knowing that these images are produced by a manipulative technology. 6

From a global perspective there have been a great many breakthroughs in feminist filmmaking to be seen in the past few years. Women have perhaps had the most important impact in the fields of documentary and experimental films, where all the modern developments of cinema technology — such as light and portable sync sound equipment, video portapak and transfer facilities and new accessible methods of animation — have been pressed into service for making low-budget films which present women's visions of ourselves and the issues which concern us in ways which stimulate dialogue and further thinking on the part of the audience. A number of feminist filmmakers, especially in the U.S. and Canada, have been increasingly concerned with the need to share the *process* of filmmaking with the subjects of the film as fully as possible — one very important example is Bonnie Klein, with her work in VTR, and she has documented the process of teaching people to use video to organize themselves in the film *VTR St. Jacques*. Jo Ann Elam, from Chicago, has made an important film about rape in which members of a group of women who have been victims of rape videotape their own discussion about rape and the filmmaker expands the implications of their discussion with intercut titles and dramatized sequences. The striking thing about the film *Rape* is that it profoundly analyzes its subject without exploiting the women concerned, without a trace of titillation or sensationalism — yet it explodes upon the consciousness of every audience I have seen it with.

More and more feminist filmmakers are exploring ways of distributing their low-budget films on alternative circuits. This is much easier in the U.S., with so many community colleges and universities spread thickly across the country, or in Great Britain or France, where the population is densely concentrated and there are numerous cine-clubs, than in Canada, where a much more widely scattered population and a colonized distribution system are double handicaps for alternative filmmakers. Our own feature films, made by men or women, must often find alternative distribution, and our own establishment "alternative" for the industry, the National Film Board, is not entirely reliable or sufficient in its bureaucratic massiveness, to suit all the needs of feminist filmmakers across the country. Again, the brutal reality of the commodity nature of film must not be ignored when considering possibilities for feminists in the media.

In Hollywood, where film-as-commodity is an unquestioned fact, the great discovery has been made that a market exists for films which do not overtly exploit women, and in the past year a handful of modestly (for Hollywood) budgeted features directed by women have gone into production, much touted by the media as evidence that women need struggle no longer — we've arrived.

I'm curious to see what we'll do now that we are here now that it is again well-known that girls can make films. 7 But there is another popular myth to be dealt with in this context, and that is the myth of the Great Director. Great Directors, so the myth goes, are born, not made, and all the really great directors have been men. What woman has produced a body of work comparable to that of Eisenstein, or Bunuel, or Hitchcock? What woman, I would reply, of the many who have shown comparable promise in their first and sometimes second features, have been given the opportunity to go on and make the mistakes and acquire the confident skills that go into the making of Great Directors, who are, I would argue, made, not born? In fact, I would go on, oddly enough, in a certain socialist film industry a woman has been rather quietly producing, over the past decade, an increasingly impressive body of films, first documentaries, then features, which have all the symptoms of being the early work of a Great Director. Her name is Marta Meszaros, and her films are about women of all ages and classes in Hungary, and they'll knock the titles off any Hollywood and most European features I've seen for being films which are very strongly the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people. And Marta Meszaros should lay a wreath upon the grave of Lois Weber; and Joyce Wieland should pay homage to the robust memory of Nell Shipman; and all of us should let flowers fall upon the tomb of Alice Guy, who first claimed for us the right to make our living by our own vision and our own skills. We are still fighting for that right, and for the society in which we can strive to make our visions realities. □

1. The implications of mechanically reproduced art forms were just explored by Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1936, translated and reprinted in *Illuminations*, a collection of his writings, also in *Marxism and Art*, ed. Lang and Williams, 1972.

2. Reprinted in *Women and the Cinema*, ed. Kay and Peary, 1977.

3. From a discussion held during *Four Days in May*, a conference held at the NFB in Montreal in 1975. See also my article "Before the Gueidlières: Women's Films at the NFB during World War II," *Canadian Film Reader*, ed. Feldman and Nelson, 1977.

4. For further reading on this subject see the bibliography on feminist criticism in *Jump Cut*, no. 1.

5. See John Berger et alia, *Ways of Seeing*, 1972; also Carol Duncan, "The Aesthetics of Power in Modern Erotic Art," *Heresies*, no. 1, 1977.

6. See Christine Gledhill, "Whose Choice?; Teaching Films About Abortion," *Screen Education*, Autumn 1977.

7. I think it's important to distinguish between films directed by women which nevertheless exploit sexist attitudes (such as Lina Wertmüller's undeniably powerful "Swept Away") and films informed by a feminist consciousness which avoid exploitation and concentrate instead on exploration of women's (and often men's) experience (such as Claudia Weill's "Girlfriends" and the films of Marta Maszaros).



In the early years of the motion picture industry, an overwhelming number of young women, some talented and others not, left their secure, middle-class homes or factory jobs for new lives as Hollywood starlets. Those who did not find success on the silver screen soon slipped back into lives of obscurity. But some would-be actresses displayed such versatility behind the cameras that they became known primarily as writers, directors, and producers. Such were the cases of Lois Weber, Cleo Madison, and Canada's Nell Shipman.



The crew gathers round (circa 1920) as son Barry Shipman plays with a dog and mother holds on to a white cat

nell shipman:

girl wonder from god's country

by Judith Smith

The women who succeeded as filmmakers, rather than film stars, are rarely remembered in historical and critical accounts of film's first decades. Their movies are forgotten, and the details of their lives are scantily documented. Therefore, it is a difficult task to piece together the life and career of Nell Shipman or any of her contemporaries. As Murray Summers put it, "Unfortunately, Nell Shipman — film and stage actress, film producer and director, writer... is no longer with us. Unfortunately as well, she is no longer well known at all."

The anonymity Nell Shipman faced in her later years was chronicled by Summers in an article based on her letters to him appearing in *Filmograph*, February, 1974. Ms. Shipman, who was "one of the first writers and directors of her sex to gain some stature" in motion pictures, spent her last years flat broke, supported by the kindnesses of relatives. When she died on January 23, 1970, she left behind a manuscript of her memoirs, *The Silent Screen And My Talking Heart*, which she had futilely attempted to sell to various publishers.

Born Helen Barham in 1893, Nell Shipman grew up in Victoria, British Columbia. Her parents were English, and had come West in the 1880's "armed with tents, cook stoves; spinning wheels, bowie knives and six shooters, determined to wrest a living from the Redman," though Nell herself admitted in an article entitled "Me," published in the 1919 February *Photo Play* that the Barhams had rather gross misconceptions about life in the peaceful Canadian frontier. At age thirteen, she became smitten with theatrical ambition and left home to attend drama school. Six months later, she joined a travelling company, and by the time she was fifteen, she had tried her hand at vaudeville, musical comedy and repertory theatre.

In 1907, Nell danced, sang and played piano in the Jesse Lasky production "The Pianophiends." At sixteen, she toured Alaska, heading her own company, and in 1909, she was engaged as the female lead in Charles Taylor's touring company. Playing again in Alaska, Nell was featured in "The Girl From Alaska," a play written especially for her by Taylor.

In 1910, Nell accepted the leading role in "The Barrier," a play produced by Canadian producer and theatrical manager Ernest Shipman, who organized shows in Australia, Canada, France, the U.S., as well as the Orient. Married in 1911, the couple located in California, determined to break into the movie business.

Their son, Barry Shipman, was born in Pasadena in 1912, and that same year, Nell saw her first small success in film, winning the first and second place prizes in a scenario contest sponsored by the Tally Theatre in Los Angeles. One of these scripts was produced by the Selig Polyscope Company (probably *Outwitted By Billy*, copyrighted by Selig Polyscope in 1913). The other, title unknown, was produced by Ernest Shipman with Nell in the leading role.

In 1914, Nell scripted *Shepherd Of The Southern Cross*, one of the first films to be produced in Australia. Later that same year, she went on location at Lake Tahoe to write three 3-reelers for Jack Kerrigan. It was here that she made her directorial debut, after the director and his leading lady suddenly quit the production. Nell also assumed the vacated heroine's role.

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When Nell offered a script adapted from James Oliver Curwood's novel *God's Country And The Woman* to Vitagraph Studios in 1915, it was accepted, and she was cast in the starring role — her first film for a major studio. The picture was a commercial success and led to substantial contracts with Vitagraph, Fox and Lasky in the next two years. Nell completed a total of thirteen films between 1916-1917. During the same period, she also was a frequent lecturer on behalf of Vitagraph, and published a smattering of short stories, magazine articles, and a novel.

In recent years, Nell Shipman has been noted for her profound loyalty to her Canadian homeland, a tendency so rarely exhibited by her compatriots Mary Pickford, Marie Dressler, Mack Sennett and Norma Shearer. She always wanted to make films about Canada in Canada. In early 1919, Nell wrote of her ambitions in an article for her fans: "And now; My Dream. It's a very real one to me. It is that some day I may go up into Canada, to the waterways of the Hudson Bay territory, to the plains of the Middle West, and to the mountains and forests of the coast, and make big human outdoor pictures." Her dream was to come true in a very short time, for within the year, Ernest Shipman arranged for the two of them to go to Canada and make another film based on the works of James Oliver Curwood, *Back To God's Country*. The picture was produced by Canadian Photoplays, Ltd. of Calgary. Nell played the leading role and adapted the screenplay. Ernest had negotiated a contract with Curwood which gave his wife exclusive film rights to the author's works and which guaranteed that she would star exclusively in pictures based on his stories. This contract was for a period of two years, and Ernest co-signed the agreement.

Back To God's Country, taken from Curwood's short story, "Wapi, the Walrus," was shot on location in northern Alberta along the Lesser Slave Lake and in California on the Kern River, beginning in March 1919. The bitter winter weather sometimes reached 60 degrees below zero F., and conditions were so harsh that the leading man, Ronald Byram, caught pneumonia and died, following a prolonged exposure. But despite this setback, the picture was completed in three months and was released by First National the following September. Viewed by audiences in North America, England, Australia, Japan and continental Europe, *Back To God's Country* became Canada's most successful feature film, grossing a half million dollars in its first year of exhibition.

Having received a 300 percent return on its initial investment, Canadian Photoplays, Ltd., went into voluntary liquidation, although almost a year remained on the Shipman-Curwood contract. James Oliver Curwood, who had been unhappy with Nell's adaptation of *Back To God's Country* (she had made ingénue the hero, instead of the dog), formed a new company, Curwood Productions, to produce films from his many stories and novels. In 1920, Nell and Ernest divorced and "Ten Percent Ernie" was given charge of sales and publicity for Curwood's company.

While Ernest maintained his northern base, Nell returned to Hollywood and began making short films independently. Never again would she make a picture under the auspices of a Canadian production company, though she did make several other feature films in Canada for American companies, including *The Girl From God's Country* (1921), and *The Golden Yukon* (1928).

By 1921, Nell had formed Nell Shipman Productions, and was busy grinding out Canadiana for the ever increasing movie audiences. Her production of **The Girl From God's Country** alone was enough to win Nell her nickname "A Jill of All Trades," for not only did she produce and star in this vehicle, but wrote the script and co-directed as well. She had long since gained notoriety in Hollywood for her off-screen versatility, though she remained best known as a leading lady. As one **Photoplay** rhymester put it, "She vamps and writes and lectures too, and sometimes she's an ingénue."

Between 1922 and 1924, Nell made a number of wild animal and nature shorts, some starring Johnny Fox and Flash, the Wonder Dog, though the bankruptcies of two different producers, American and Louis Selznick, kept her financial situation precarious. Now living with Bert Van Tuyle, her co-director and former production manager on **Back To God's Country**, Nell located in Upper Priest Lake, Idaho. Her home was a modest log cabin twenty-one miles from the nearest road and fifty miles from a railway line, and her cast and crew included 15 bears, 3 deer, 2 elk, 4 coyotes, 2 wolves, 1 cougar, 2 wildcats, assorted raccoons, skunks, eagles, owls, porcupines, beavers, marmots, muskrats, rabbits, dogs, and cats, plus "Old Daddy," an ex-trapper and her young son Barry.

With the terrific blizzards and inevitable isolation which winter brought, the struggles of the Shipman Production Company were further complicated by Van Tuyle's illness and need for hospitalization. Van Tuyle had frozen his foot the previous March, during a night shoot in Alberta. Though it was apparent from that point that amputation would be necessary, he stubbornly resisted medical treatment. By September, he had become a near-invalid, but no money was available for surgery.

Nell arranged to give performances in two small towns to earn the cash needed for the operation. Setting off just before Christmas, she returned in early January, following a perilous journey by snowplough and canoe over the partially frozen lake near their home. Before she could manage to return to the village with Bert, his condition worsened and he fell delirious with pain. In his confused state, he set off across the frozen wilderness alone. He reacted belligerently to Nell's attempts to aid him, and she was forced to precede him at a distance, fearing he might fall and die in the snow. Finally Van Tuyle allowed her to accompany him, and together they made their way to the Lone Star Ranch, where they sheltered overnight with some wealthy vacationers, who could not believe that the disheveled, but determined woman they entertained was truly Nell Shipman the movie star.

The following morning, Nell, Bert and a lumberjack who had come to their aid, set off across the lake through icebergs and a blanket of heavy fog which they encountered as they neared their destination. Reaching the village, they were recovered by local search parties, (organized to look for Nell since her New Year's Eve departure) and Van Tuyle was taken under the care of a local physician, who performed the amputation without benefit of anaesthesia. The entire incident received considerable press coverage, which Nell apparently felt would enhance the success of the next Shipman-Van Tuyle film project. "Oh, what glorious publicity," she wrote.

In 1925, Nell married artist Charles Ayers and pulled up stakes to move to Florida, where she participated in the production of **The Tamiami Trail**, based on one of her own sto-



A classic portrait, animals and all, of Nell Shipman in the Artic landscape

ries which had been syndicated by Florida newspapers. The following year, the Ayers were living in LaCoruna, Spain when their twins, Charles and Daphne, were born.

Nell's activity as an actress seems to have been on the wane by the early 1930's. Her most outstanding film contribution of this period came as a writer. Her story, "The Eyes of the Eagle," which concerned aviators, received the support of President Franklin Roosevelt as an Air Force motion picture project. Slated to be filmed by the U.S.A.F. with William DeMille as director, the project was moved to Paramount studios, where it was produced in 1935 under the title **Wings In The Dark**, starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy.

Wings In The Dark tells the story of a flyer (Grant), who is blinded in a plane crash and invents a device which enables him to pilot again. When his girlfriend, a stunt pilot (Myrna

Loy) becomes endangered during one of her flights, he steals an airplane and rescues her, proving the feasibility of his invention. As Loy lands her aircraft, she crashes into Grant's plane on the runway, and miraculously, both emerge unharmed with Grant's sight restored, due to the jarring. **The New York Times** found **Wings In The Dark** a "pleasantly performed and skilfully filmed melodrama," but were not impressed with the script, "an addle-pated narrative. The tedious plot machinery... proves to be disastrous to the work which is managed with such technical finesse that it ought to have been among the better pictures," the **Times** concluded.

Divorced from Charles Ayers in 1934, Nell made her way to South Africa to make more wild animal pictures in partnership with Arthur Varney, a one-time assistant to D.W. Griffith. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 halted production of **The Jungle Ship**, and Nell returned to America. During the war years, she made commercials, Army enlistment films and did voice-over narrations. She was also able to complete **The Jungle Ship** and made another film, **The Golden Road**, as well.



Little Nell stands up to the villain in Hartford's **Back to God's Country** (1919)

As anti-communist paranoia divided Hollywood during the fifties, Nell became more visibly American in her outlook, and worked on behalf of the right-wing front. At this time, she was living in Washington, D.C., and maintained close contact with members of Congress, and the departments of State and Finance. She wrote the screenplay for an anti-communist picture, **The Fifth American**, but the film encountered release difficulties. Later, in 1960, she scripted **The Fires Of Batsto**, a film about the American Revolutionary War.

Nell's activity as a writer may have left her a more enduring reputation than did her films. Her literary projects were ongoing after 1915, the year she published **Under The Crescent** (also titled **The Purple Iris**), a novel from which she also created a six part scenario, one of the first serials filmed at Uncle Carl Laemmle's Universal Studios. Other novels included **Get The Woman** (1930), **Abandoned Trails** (1932), **Tomorrow For Sale** (1941), **The Fifth American** (1962) and **Neeka Of The North**, date unavailable. Nell also published one children's story, **Kurley Kew And The Tree Princess**, in 1930, and was a frequent contributor to popular magazines of the day.

As a screenwriter, Nell lost two potentially important deals by chance, which would have undoubtedly added stature to her career. "M'sieu Sweetheart," a six part story she wrote for **McCall's** magazine, was chosen by Twentieth Century Fox as a comeback property for Clara Bow, but the deal was scrapped before production ever began. "Hot Oil," written in collaboration with G.P. Putnam, in 1934, was slated for a movie adaptation starring Will Rogers, when the humorist died unexpectedly in a plane crash.

Even in her old age, Nell remained creative, and in the last year of her life still bubbled with ideas for novels and film projects. She wrote of these to Summers, and particularly, of her desire to go to Washington, D.C. again, and make a documentary. In her seventies, she seemingly was quite willing to pick up and move across the country and once more open up offices as an independent producer. "Even at this ripe old age," she wrote, "I do not live in the past or pluck at memories' worn harp strings. (I) am most awfully keen for the now." She lived in a house with sixteen cats near Palm Springs, California. Since she had usually been her own boss, Nell was ineligible for social security benefits, and her main support came from her son Barry, who had become a top film producer for the United States Air Force. She was proud of Barry and revelled in delight each time he confounded the governmental hierarchy, "the Establishment," as she called them.

Nell Shipman, a diverse woman, who flippantly described herself in 1919, as being interested in "Feminism," "Socialism," and other 'Isms,' " was one of the very few women of her generation to maintain her place as a producer and director for more than thirty years. Her enthusiasm for film never diminished, from her earliest days as a scenarist in Hollywood through her last years of semi-retirement. She was also well aware, it seems, of the unique value of those early experiences. In 1925, she wrote: "It warms our hearts and inspires our minds to know there is a generation of young and lively students who care about our beginnings and the ring circles of our growth, and are ready themselves to contribute to the ever-present goal for film perfection." □

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creative, clever, & competent

The biannual animated blast has taken place in Ottawa to the joy of animators and their fans. Robert Hookey found substance as well as form in this year's selection.

by Robert Hookey



Making choices in *When I'm Rich* (New Fields Animation)

Ottawa 78, the International Animated Film Festival, returned to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, with an enticing program both in the competition and retrospectives. As in Ottawa 76, the animation techniques were impressive. There was, however, an added treat; some of the *concepts* were equally impressive.

One of the recurring communication weaknesses in animated films is the development of an appropriate idea that will lend itself to animated treatment. Perhaps there should be more concentration on creative thinking and story-telling in the education or apprenticeship of the animator. This might help alleviate a recent trend toward self-indulgence in the art of animation. To paraphrase Pablo Picasso on the nature of art and the artist, "The modern artist should be aware of the principles of the artistic tradition and incorporate them into his philosophy so that his art will not become merely self-indulgent, but new artistic speech will be created."

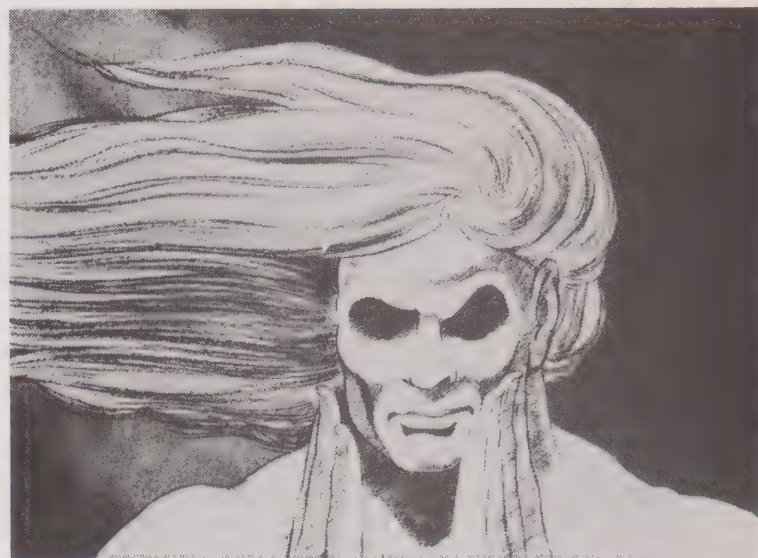
Some of the "new artistic speech" was present in **La-byrinth**, the winner in the First Film category. In this cleverly conceived film the remark "It's a dog's life?," takes on new meaning. The dog's life seems like heaven in contrast to the hell that man has made in his preoccupation with his own neurotic reaching after the meaning of existence and happiness. A masterful use of geometrics and perspective creates the illusion of the labyrinth in this exquisite film, produced independently by Shelly McIntosh of Vancouver.

When I'm Rich, a film from Great Britain, deals with a dream that everyone has had about what one would do if he suddenly won a fortune. The character in the film lives in a modest apartment and tries to make his dull life more glamorous by day-dreaming about how he would react to his new-found largesse. He dreams about buying the apartment building in which he lives and forcing out his neighbor, whom he dislikes. The tables are turned on him when his neighbor suddenly becomes rich and begins to force *him* out. A clever idea combined with superb technique makes this a witty and meaningful film.

Another significant film **Why Me?**, is concerned with how a person reacts to news of his imminent death. Janet Perlman and Derek Lamb of the National Film Board approach this delicate subject in satiric fashion, but with the aim to educate us about the value of life. A man is informed by his doctor that he has a few minutes to live. We see him go through the phases of shock, utter disbelief and finally resignation. After he plays out these phases in the office, the doctor indicates that he has a few precious moments left. Both Lamb and Perlman are to be commended for being daring enough to deal with a difficult subject in a unique and memorable style. Janet Perlman's delicious film, **Lady Fishbourne's Complete Guide to Better Table Manners**, the first prize winner in the Instructional Film category, is a delightfully disarming film. Lady Fishbourne is an authority on table etiquette and, as she comments on the subject, her talk is illustrated by a group of most unmannerly table guests. They show the "how-not-to" aspect of fine dining. This film is both humorous and educational, combining concept and technique to communicate creatively and clearly.

Some films failed to achieve this happy artistic marriage between concept and technique. Although an international jury chose to honor a film by Kathy Rose called **Pencil Book-lings**, with first prize in category A, Films Longer than Three Minutes, the film is self-indulgent. Even though Kathy Rose is a competent animator, the concept of the film is weakly developed; it becomes rambling and boring. If her purpose was to show the symbiotic relationship between the animator and her animated characters, that goal was achieved very early in the film. She animated herself creating her characters.

A French film entitled **La traversée de l'Atlantique à la rame**, by Jean François Laquionie, won the Grand Prix Award. This captivating film that takes newlyweds on a treacherous journey by rowboat across the Atlantic Ocean, is a parable about the need for love as a binding force in marriage's sometimes turbulent sea. Laquionie's skillful use of his colored cut-out technique, using pastels to create a romantic setting and mood, is a fine example of the artistic marriage between concept and technique. One hopes this film points to a trend in animation that considers the importance of the relationship between concept and technique and discourages a trend towards self-indulgence.

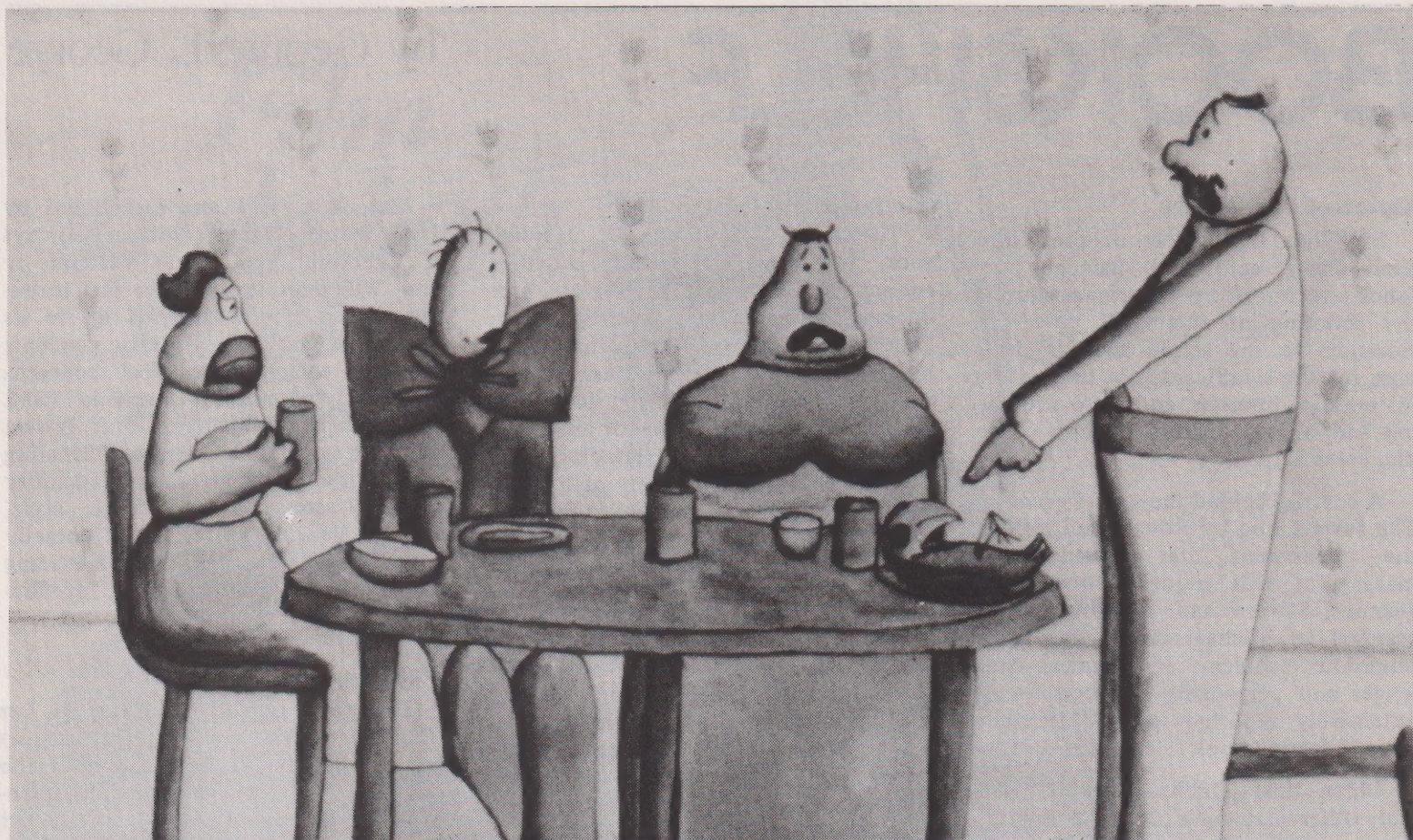


An exercise in might from Richard Williams's *Jovan: The Power*

The informative and interesting retrospectives were a highlight of the festival. They honored Segundo de Chomon, Otto Messmer, George Dunning and Walt Disney, all masters in the field of animation. Segundo de Chomon, a Spanish animator born in 1871, contributed the one turn, one picture technique to the art of film. One day, while Segundo was sub-titling a film, a fly crossed the sub-title unbeknownst to him. When he viewed the film, he saw this fly moving across the screen in a bizarre but entertaining fashion making abrupt and sometimes jumping moves. This experience revealed to Segundo the possibility of animating objects filmically. His most witty and entertaining film is called **El Hotel Electrico**. The owner of a hotel has replaced his staff with an electrical system that fulfills the services offered to his guests. One of his guests is seen getting a shave with the brush lathering and the razor shaving without the assistance of a barber.

One of the world's most familiar and charming animated characters is Felix the Cat. His creator, Otto Messmer, has just recently received credit for the creation of Felix, in

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Teaching etiquette in Lady Fishbourne's Complete Guide to Better Table Manners (NFB)

the past the producer, Pat Sullivan — Otto's employer — took all the credit. A sensitive portrait of Otto Messmer was given by Louise Beaudet in a film retrospective that was screened at the festival. George Dunning's retrospective stressed the contribution he had made to the technique of animation. Prescott Wright, International Director of Festival '78, describes the scope of Dunning's contribution in the following observations. "His filmography reveals a creative restlessness with many media; he experimented and set standards with metal cut-outs in **Cadet Rouselle**, experimented in painting on glass under the camera, created imaginative characterizations in **The Yellow Submarine** and developed the structural pencilled dynamics in the split-screen Haiku adaptation, **Damon the Mower** and continues his present work in imaginative television commercials."

Walt Disney, the great wizard of animation, was given a tribute with the special festival screening of **Pinocchio**, a film that still makes magic for young and old audiences wherever it is shown. Ward Kimball, sometimes called Disney's right-hand man due to the trust Disney had in his judgment, was present to introduce the Disney in Space retrospective. It was officially part of a film series called "The Science Factual Film." The films discussed the possibilities of space travel long before the Americans put a man on the moon. **Space Medicine**, **The Man in Space**, **Tomorrow the Moon**, **Mars and Beyond** are some of the titles in the series. Educating and entertaining at the same time, Walt Disney illustrates weightlessness in space by having the average man trying to drink a martini in the state of weightlessness. It is a classic scene in film humor. The man is never able to pour or drink the martini successfully.

Ward Kimball, in introducing the series, shared an interesting anecdote about his former boss. Some representatives of the Russian Government came to the Disney studios to ask if they could borrow some films from the **Man in Space** series. In this situation you would think that Disney would say no to the request since he might be aiding the Communist cause. His reply took the following form. "Hell! no! They borrowed **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** and they didn't return it!"

None other than Mickey Mouse was the special guest at the Animator's Picnic. The picnic is always a central feature of the festival. It provides the opportunity for animators from around the world to socialize and exchange ideas. One impression from the picnic was how much the animated characters can resemble their creators. Ward Kimball, for example closely resembles his own animated character, Jiminy Cricket, in the way he talks and through his facial expressions.

ASIFA, The International Animated Film Association, provided a friendly and helpful reception centre, Chez Ani, where one could get a cup of coffee, something to eat and be entertained by animated films not included in the festival program. Co Hoedeman, who did a super job of organizing the previous festival's workshop, showed his talents as organizer of Chez Ani.

Although many people contributed to the success of Festival 78, special kudos are to be given to Frederik Manter, Festival Director; Kelly O'Brien, Assistant Director; Prescott Wright, International Director; and the International Jury: John Canemaker (USA), Paul Dopff (France), Paul Driessen (Holland), Miroslaw Kijowicz (Poland), and Marv Newland (Canada). □

BOOKSHELF

by George L. George

Aspects of Film Making

In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind Diary*, actor Bob Balaban publishes a record of his experiences during the shooting of this sci-fi epic. His closeness to the action and his sharp nose for the significant, not to mention his sense of humour, add up to a revealing and briskly written memoir (Paradise Press \$1.95).

A colorful behind-the-scenes account, *The Jaws 2 Log* by Roy Loynd reflects the excitement that pervaded the making of this sequel. Directed by Jeannot Szwarc and superbly photographed by Michael Butler, the film's numerous problems — technical challenges and personality conflicts — are extensively reported in this entertaining and factual book (Dell \$1.95).

Olden times, biblical, mythological and otherwise, have been a favorite motion picture setting. Jon Solomon has thoroughly researched films with that background and discusses some 400 of them in *The Ancient World in the Cinema*, roaming film history from Giovanni Pastrone 1914 "Cabiria" to De Mille's "King of Kings" and Fellini's "Satyricon" (Barnes \$19.95).

In *The Fifty Worst Films of All Times*, movie buffs Harry Medved and Randy Dreyfuss have produced a wit-ty and sophisticated compilation of cinematic duds. Impressively supported by lacerating quotations from leading film critics, their list comprises a surprising number of notorious titles, from D.W. Griffith's "Abraham Lincoln" to Richard Donner's "The Omen" (Popular Library \$6.95).

On the occasion of the studio's 50th anniversary, Walt Disney's *Adventures of Mickey Mouse* is reprinted from its original edition of the early 30's. It contains 3 delightful stories appropriately illustrated with classical Disney cartoon characters, reflecting the innocence an era that seems to have lulled children and adults into a mindless euphoria (McKay \$7.95).

Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

The Directorial Craft

The career of Joseph L. Mankiewicz, whose multifaceted activities encompassed directing, writing and producing, is perceptively investigated in *Pictures Will Talk*, a fascinating profile by Kenneth L. Geist. Extensively and conscientiously documented from original sources with an eye for authentic detail, this spellbinding biography offers a vivid and incisive portrait of a sensitive, shrewd and creative individual. Mankiewicz's private life is intimately examined in this in-depth report on an exceptionally gifted artist (Scribners \$12.95).

Donald Spoto, whose recent book about Hitchcock ranks high among the studies of that director, has written a solid appraisal of a man he considers one of the prime pioneers of mature contemporary American movies. In *Stanley Kramer: Film Maker*, Spoto offers an appreciative film-by-film assessment of Kramer's work as director and producer, subjecting his movies to a well balanced analysis of their form and content (Putnam \$12.95).

In *Robert Altman: American Innovator*, Judith M. Kass views the director of such films as *Nashville*, *3 Women* and the trend-setting *M*A*S*H** as a supreme non-conformist, whose original approach to film making is to reveal to his audience an unsuspected world almost beyond its reach. This is a revealing and thoughtful book, with a complete filmography of Altman's films (Popular Library \$2.25).

Joshua Logan's autobiography, *Movie Stars, Real People, and Me*, deals mainly with his Hollywood career as distinct from his Broadway work. It's a highly entertaining tale of people and events, replete with anecdotes and gossip as well as fond recollections of some of his friends (Delacorte \$9.95).

From N.Y. Zoetrope (31 E. 12 St., NYC 10003), two valuable studies of directors. *The Films of Vincente Minnelli* is a comprehensive backward look at his oeuvre, compiled on the occasion of a recent retrospective, and edited by Penny Yates (\$3). In *Don Siegel*, originally issued by the British Film Institute, Alan Lovell addresses himself to the sociological issues raised by Siegel's work, a scholarly study that sets his films in a societal perspective (\$3).

Also from BFI and distributed by N.Y. Zoetrope, two additional surveys of directors. *Pier Paolo Pasolini* by Paul Willeman investigates the turbulent career of the director up to its tragic end, linking his stylistic concepts and his socio-philosophical concerns with Italy's cultural heritage (\$3). In *Lauder and Gilliat*, Geoff Brown appraises the popular British alternating writer/Director team. Their versatility in story concepts and filmic style, their ability to switch from comedy to drama, has earned them a leading role in their country's film production (\$3.50).

Recent French Books

Director François Truffaut, in *Les films de ma vie*, collects many articles and movie reviews he wrote over the years, a vivid and perceptive commentary on the evolution of cinema art and the influence the French New Wave on a generation of filmmakers (Flammarion 48F.). A translation has been recently published as *The Films In My Life* (Simon & Schuster \$12.50).

In *Les canards majuscules*, Madeleine Robinson reminisces about her screen and stage career, a life marked by success as an actress and disappointment as a woman. She tells it all with simple and engaging honesty, against a background of a France in turmoil (Laffont 40F.).

More a novel than a memoir, Jean Renoir's *Le cœur à l'aise* expresses the personality of the celebrated director through a choice of themes and happenings, a panorama of Renoir's slightly cynical attitude, his joyous sensuality and his rich love of humanity (Flammarion 40F.).

Hungarian director Miklos Jancso is the subject of a detailed biography by Yvette Biro, who describes with intelligence and perceptivity Jancso's keyed-up work methods, his historic themes choreographed in sweeping visual style, his lyrical landscapes and his luscious nudes (Albatros 30F.).

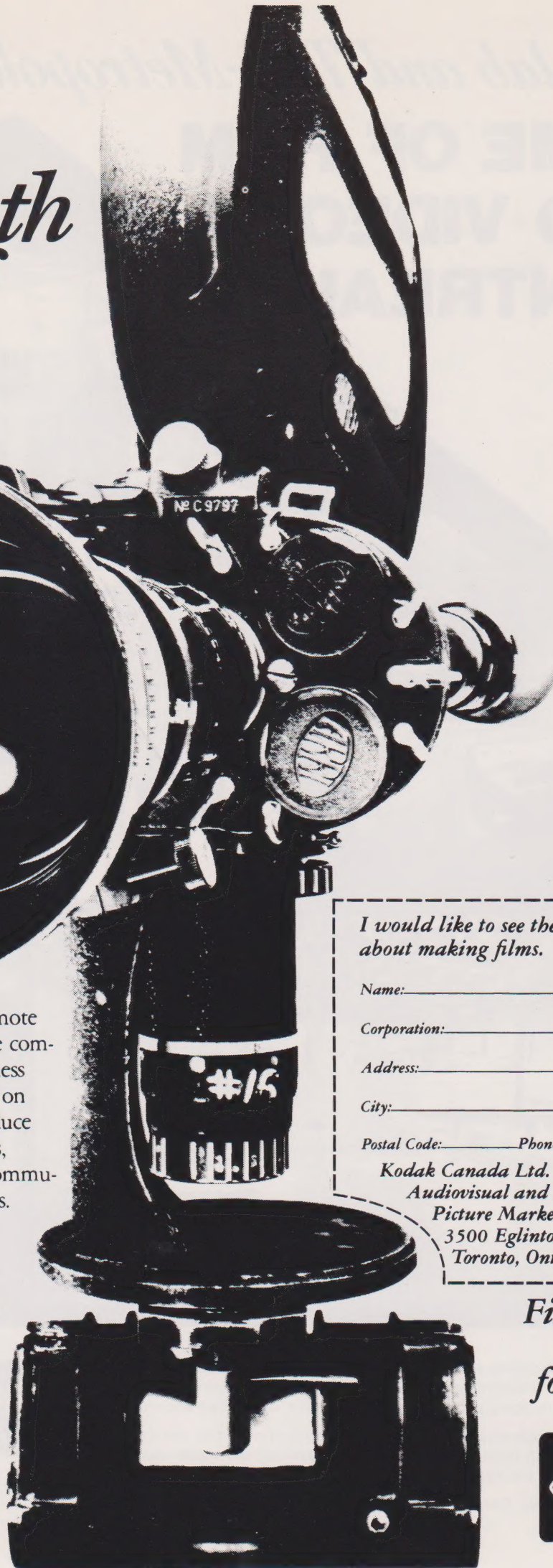
In a special issue of the magazine *Ecran*, Guy Hennebelle and Robert Prot review the decade since the May 1968 events that saw a proliferation of the "cinéma de contestation." Many points of view find expression in this issue, offering a rich perspective on the future of film in shaping society (*Ecran* No. 78, 12F.). □

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